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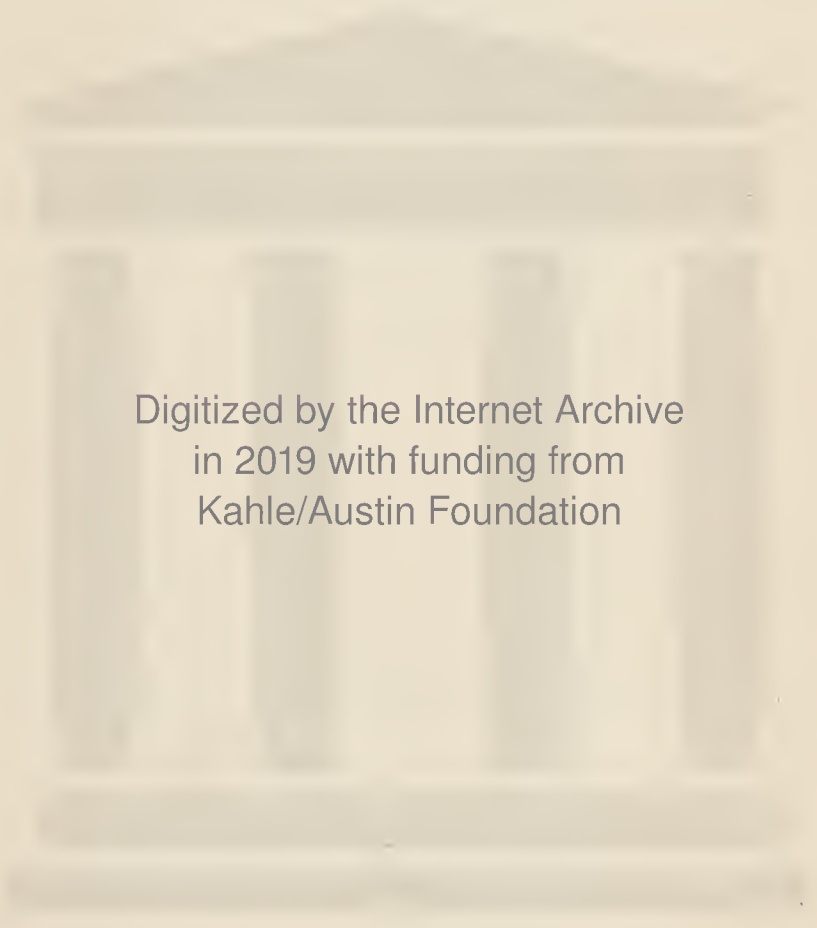
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Basil Wilberforce

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BASIL WILBERFORCE

A MEMOIR

BY THE RIGHT HON.
GEORGE W. E. RUSSELL

In this world we believe in part and prophesy in part,
and this imperfection shall never be done away till we be
transplanted to a more glorious state.—JEREMY TAYLOR.

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.
1917

TO
H. W. W. AND V. M. K.
FROM
G. W. E. R.

"THINE OWN FRIEND, AND THY FATHER'S FRIEND,
FORSAKE NOT."

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BASIL WILBERFORCE

CHAPTER I

BEGINNINGS

“I DEEM it to be my greatest boast to be sprung from one who, gifted with the vastest opportunities, with the friendship, the closest friendship, of England’s greatest Minister, the highest powers, the most commanding social position, used them all for no personal aggrandisement, and died a poorer man than when he entered public life, seeing every one of his contemporaries raised to wealth and hereditary honours ; leaving his children no high rank or dignity, according to the notions of this world, but bequeathing to them the perilous inheritance of a name which the Christian world venerates.”

The foregoing words were spoken by Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop successively of Oxford and of Winchester, with reference to the great Emancipator, whose third son he was.

Samuel Wilberforce, born in 1805, married in 1828 Emily Sargent, daughter, and in her

issue heir, of the Rev. John Sargent, Squire and Rector of Lavington, near Petworth. They had six children, of whom the youngest—the subject of this Memoir—was born on the 15th of February 1841.

Samuel Wilberforce was at this time Arch-deacon of Surrey and Canon of Winchester, and it was in the Close at Winchester that his youngest child was born. On the 16th of February he wrote thus to a friend: “God has again been gracious to us. . . . About half-past two, Emily rejoiced over a little boy, whose fat, vigorous looks spoke of the fullest health and strength.” But already there was illness in the home, and the father’s joy was tempered by anxiety. It was discovered, too late, that the main drain of the city ran under his official house, and his only daughter¹ was attacked by fever. “We cannot,” he wrote, “but be in very great anxiety about her.” She recovered, and lived to a great age; but the young mother contracted the same disease, and died on the 10th of March. “A day of unknown agony to me. Every feeling stunned. Paroxysms of convulsive anguish, and no power of looking up through the darkness which had settled on my soul.”²

Mrs Wilberforce was buried at Lavington on the 17th of March, and two days later the bereaved father baptized the child in Winchester

¹ Afterwards Mrs Pye.

² From Bishop Wilberforce’s diary.

Cathedral. There were four sponsors—the third Lord Calthorpe; the Rev. R. C. Trench, afterwards Archbishop of Dublin; Mrs Ryder, sister of Mrs Wilberforce; and Miss Olivia Way. The child was called Albert Basil Orme. The name Albert had a double allusion—to Prince Albert, who had just made Archdeacon Wilberforce his chaplain, and to Albert Way of Stanstead, the Archdeacon’s early friend. Orme was the name of the family from which the estate of Lavington had immediately descended to the Sargents; and it is reasonable to connect the name Basil with the great Father of the Fourth Century.

Mr Trench’s poem, written on the occasion of the baptism and addressed to his godson, may be inserted here:—

I.

Child of my spiritual love!—others I claim,
Nor are they not unto my spirit near,
While they, too, bear for me this holy name,
And by its right are dear:
And yet they do not stir for me, as thou
Stirrest the fountains of my bosom now.

II.

For memory guardeth yet,
And will in holiest places guard, the hour
When first beside that sacred font we met,
And on thy forehead meek the seal was set,
And given the robe of power.

III.

Beneath my feet he lay—
 His little mouldering clay,
 So lately to the heartless earth consigned,
 Even his, for ever dear, the first who came
 To bid me know what meant a father's name,
 With a child's love about my heart to wind.¹

IV.

And all around me did a frequent band
 Of newer mourners stand :
 For thou, unconscious child, hast yet to learn
 'That it was at thy birth
 As if a star had quitted earth,
 Thee clothing in its radiance mild,
 And in a splendour undefiled,
 But never more in our dim air to burn.

V.

Oh then, dear child, be thou for ever strong,
 As one who for these dearest issues came
 Into this world, as one to whom belong
 The glory and the burden of a name,
 Thy sire's and grandsire's ;—ample be thy dower !
 And all thy life the unfolding, hour by hour,
 Of what was at that font made thine of grace and
 power.

Basil Wilberforce was accustomed, all through his life, to say that his father had been father and mother in one to him, as

¹ Two months earlier Mr Trench had lost a child, who was buried in Winchester Cathedral.

also to his sister and elder brothers ; and the Bishop's diaries and letters abundantly confirm the testimony.¹ “ I can hardly bear,” he wrote, “ to look at the children, the youngest—Basil—especially, without tears ” ; and to Basil he referred repeatedly as “ my Benoni, the child of woe.” Great as a father's devotion may be, nothing can ever compensate for the loss of a mother's influence ; but whatever could be supplied by care and affection was supplied to the Bishop's children by their grandmother, Mrs Sargent, who, after Mrs Wilberforce's death, made her home with her son-in-law, and helped him with unselfish tenderness till her death in 1861. “ Mrs Sargent,” he said, “ gives these children a watchful, elastic, affectionate care, which is continually exciting my absolute wonder.”

In 1844 he wrote : “ Basil is a most beloved boy. Ella² took care of him this evening, to let the maids go to church, and said that he sat talking to himself over his toy-animals. ‘ This poor elephant is rather cold. Now this naughty hyæna ’ (he always made the hyæna naughty) ‘ must stand shivering with cold when the others go to bed, because it has been so quarrelsome and disobedient.’ ” Again in 1847 : “ Basil is so sensible, and able to do anything he likes. Beloved boy, how he would have been visibly

¹ Archdeacon Samuel Wilberforce was made Dean of Westminster in 1845 ; Bishop of Oxford in the same year ; and Bishop of Winchester in 1869. He died in 1873.

² Emily Charlotte Wilberforce, afterwards Mrs Pye.

beloved! I feel to owe him a double share of love." But later we find: "How hard a boy he is to manage! Lord, help me in doing it. Yet he is full of affection."

In March 1853 the Bishop writes in his diary: "A letter telling me that beloved Basil has congestion of the left lung. Most deeply wounded. That boy—at this season—my beloved boy, my Benoni." On the following day: "A favourable report of Basil. Oh, may God continue it. I woke constantly in the night to think of him and pray for him."

Although the Bishop was the most devoted of fathers, it was impossible for him to see as much of his children as he would have wished; for his characteristic was ubiquity. He was comparatively little at home, and was perpetually moving about his diocese, with frequent excursions to the remotest parts of the United Kingdom, and not seldom to the Continent. The elderly and sorrow-stricken grandmother could scarcely be expected to cope with four vigorous and high-spirited boys; and the Bishop's sons were early despatched to a private school, which it would be unfair to particularize. A man who was a pupil there, and rose to eminence in political life, supplies the following note: "The Wilberforces left a general tradition of lawlessness, the fame of which had not died out even in my time. Basil Wilberforce told me, when he was Chaplain to the Speaker, that even down to the time

at which he was speaking, whenever he had a nightmare or a bad dream, he was always pursued by the dread figure of our tyrant, the Rev. X.Y.Z., who, when the wind was in the east and his liver out of order, could be a perfect devil; though at other times pleasant enough."

From this place of torment (on which he always looked back with horror) Basil Wilberforce was transferred to Eton in the summer school-time of 1854. He boarded at the house of the Rev. Russell Day, who was also his tutor, and afterwards with the Rev. W. A. Carter. Some extracts from his letters to his father may be here inserted, and they are eminently characteristic of his special hobbies:—

"Do you remember saying that when I was sent up for good you would give me a parrakeet? Now it is quite impossible for me to be sent up for good in my present division, because we have got so very many Tugs¹ in our division. If they were out of the way I might have a chance. I have got my eye upon a lovely parrakeet that does all sorts of tricks; its price is 30s. I have got 10s. left of my own, with which, if you should think right to send me the rest, would just be right, but after what you told me at Lavington² I would rather see all the

¹ Collegers.

² The Bishop had acquired the estate of Lavington by the death of Mrs Wilberforce's two brothers. It was his home, as distinct from his official residence at Cuddesdon.

parrots at the bottom of the Red Sea sooner than that you should send me money that you want, you dear. There would be no fear of his interfering with my lessons like a lot of canaries, because he makes no noise." In another letter he begs his father to send his "poor old Cockatoo," killed by his fox, to the Eton bird-stuffer. He has had a deal in animals with a school-fellow, "who has promised to give me a very handsome almond tumbler pigeon for the fox, which will be (as almond tumblers are very scarce) a jolly exchange."

Another request is: "If you can manage to find that rod you spoke of, I should be delighted to have it here. I am completely destitute of all sorts of rods, and I am very fond of fishing." He also demands "a reel and fly-line." "I find my new Fifth Form work uncommonly hard, but as I work like a horse at it, I get on very well considering. . . . I am completely penniless, but I don't care a rap about that so as I have a rod and line to fish with."

We must now turn to the Bishop's side of these experiences. On the 21st of November 1855 he writes in his diary: "Saw Basil, and R. Day, who recommends Basil leaving Eton." On the 5th of December: "A most unsatisfactory talk with Day." On the 16th of January 1856: "Eton. Saw Carter, who agreed to take Basil to try him." Idleness was the gravest fault

alleged; but this proved to be inveterate. At the end of Lent school-time 1856, Basil Wilberforce left Eton, and went as a private pupil to the Rev. James Fraser, then Vicar of Cholderton and afterwards Bishop of Manchester.

At this point the Bishop's spirits, which were essentially mercurial, began to revive. On the 30th of April 1856 he wrote: "Full of gratitude as to my children. Ernest¹ and Bas promising." On the 29th of July Basil was confirmed by his father, and on the 17th of August the Bishop wrote in his diary: "Prayed with dear Basil before his first Communion. Service at Graffham.² All my three boys (*D.G.*) there."

On the 9th of September he wrote: "A sad parting with dear Basil, for I know not how long." Returning from a trip on the Continent, Basil was transferred to another tutor; in 1857 to a third; and in 1859 to a fourth—the Rev. Lewis M. Owen—at Colchester. The Bishop writes thus to his eldest surviving son:—

"Ernest and Bas are just now fishing in Devonshire with Ernest's old tutor, Owen, to

¹ Ernest Roland, afterwards Bishop of Newcastle and of Chichester, was the Bishop's third son. The eldest, Herbert William, R.N., died Feb. 29, 1856, of exposure in the Crimea. The eldest surviving son was Reginald Garton, who succeeded his father in the Lavington property.

² Graffham is the parish annexed to Lavington.

whom I have moved Basil that he may have his last year before Oxford with an Oxford man. Ellis, a son of Lord Howard de Walden, has been a fellow-pupil there. He is a great naturalist. He took Bas out for a naturalist excursion on Dartmoor, which was to last two days and one night ; but instead of that they stayed a week, though the weather was bad, sleeping out and cooking mutton for themselves. At last Ernest got thoroughly nervous about Bas, and hired a Tiverton horse and set out to find him. After 24 miles' riding, the horse tumbled down and cut one of Ernest's knees, breaking both his own very severely. Ernest had to ride on four miles, and then got a trap and drove home. Next day Bas returned all right."

It may be remarked in passing that Mr Owen and Basil Wilberforce became warmly attached to one another. In 1868, Owen, acknowledging a testimonial which had been presented to him by his former pupils, in expressing the liveliest gratitude for the part which Wilberforce had taken in the matter, said : "May God bless you and them in whatever station of life He sees best to place them," and signed himself, "Your grateful and affectionate friend."

On the 13th of March 1860, Basil Wilberforce matriculated at Oxford and entered Exeter College, whither his brother Ernest had preceded him in 1859. In after-life, he was

accustomed to declare that he never knew why he had been sent to Exeter; but there were plenty of considerations which made the choice reasonable. Oriel, of which Bishop Wilberforce had been a member in its days of glory, was not at this time a popular college. Exeter was popular for two different, though not incompatible, reasons. In the first place, it had acquired, when William Sewell (afterwards Warden of Radley) was one of its tutors, a high reputation as a place of training for Holy Orders, and strong Churchmen took to sending their sons there on that account. In the second, it was much frequented by Etonians, and of these many were hunting men, belonging to the County families of Oxfordshire, with whom the Bishop was on terms of cordial friendship.

In later days Basil Wilberforce often said: "I should have been a much more learned man if I had not been so fond of hunting at Oxford." Traces of that fondness, and of his love for horses generally, appear at every turn of his undergraduate life. He hunted with the Bicester Hounds; "cut" lectures in order to attend a steeple-chase at Leamington; and kept a pack of beagles on the Episcopal premises at Cuddesdon. The Rev. Rowley Lascelles writes:—

"His lovely little beagle ('Dairymaid,' I think) and his beautiful roan horse on which

he used to ride when hunting his beagle-pack, were the objects of great affection and sympathy, and this feeling lasted all his life, and seemed to increase as he grew older. . . .

“In November 1860, several of us breakfasted at Pyrton Manor (some 16 miles from Oxford), invited by dear ‘Jack Hamersley,’ afterwards the Rev. Arthur Hamersley, Basil taking his beagles, and all hoping for a gallop after a hare. Basil’s favourite roan could not go with his master—I think he was lame—so Basil had hired a bad-tempered brown horse for the day. When a hare was found this brown horse positively refused to go near the first fence, whereupon I offered him a little sweet-tempered grey mare I was riding. This he accepted, leaving me to argue the point with the brown—all in vain; for, after killing the hare, on his return to the scene the brown and I were as far as ever from friendly agreement. Basil, very much against my wish, insisted upon taking to the culprit once more, while the beagles rested.

“The end of the episode was, that, after much coaxing and persuading, Basil’s indomitable will conquered—the first fence was thus overcome, the second cost about five minutes of precious time, the third was negotiated without difficulty, and thenceforward not one fence was refused. His enemies might have called it pig-headedness. Others might have recognized something much higher in embryo.”

One who was at that time a Fellow of Exeter bears this emphatic testimony: “Basil Wilberforce was what might be called a very frolicsome undergraduate, but without reproach in the graver matters of drink and sensuality. At one time he smoked to excess, and endangered his life by the practice. He had been known to fall off his horse through a sudden heart-attack brought on by smoking. On one occasion he fell insensible on the floor of his lodgings, and it might have gone hard with him if assistance had not been at hand.” Of his “frolicsomeness” the following instance is supplied by a contemporary:—

“He was clever in drawing with his pen, and he made a picture of the Dons of Exeter, illustrating their bodies by sketches of all kinds of beasts and serpents and monkeys—some monkeys climbing up trees, some sitting on the branches, and the beasts roaming about underneath—and as the face of each he attached a *photograph* of the Don. I remember the Bursar sitting as a monkey on a branch, sucking his thumb—it was very grotesque and very clever. I saw it in a shop-window—*it was soon withdrawn*, and there were what is popularly called ‘ructions.’”

The Rev. J. J. Mallaby thus describes him: “His characteristic was his deeply affectionate nature, which made him popular with all, and

greatly beloved by his friends.¹ He was full of life, wit, and good spirits, though in health he was far from robust. He carried, by doctor's orders, some heart-medicine always in his pocket."

These instances of cardiac trouble account for the constant solicitude about Basil's health which pervades the Bishop's diaries and letters :

"*Jan. 27, 1861.*—In to Oxford. Saw both my dears—Bas not well."

"*May 2, 1861.*—Still very, very sad about Basil. *Miserere Domine.*"

"*Nov. 16, 1864.*—I am very anxious about Basil's health, and break many a night's rest with the thought of him and of you [Reginald Wilberforce] in your lonely distance."

The Bishop, in spite of his incessant journeyings, contrived to see a good deal of his sons. He rode with them, skated with them, played billiards with them, and did all in his power to make the motherless home happy.

"*July 5, 1862.*—Dear Basil came *en route* for Wales. Very dear and affectionate."

"*Dec. 31, 1861.*—Basil and I walked together and marked a few trees. Their smoking sadly parts me from them. I would

¹ Many of these friends were Freemasons. Basil Wilberforce joined the Apollo Lodge at Oxford in 1862, and proceeded in due time to higher grades of the craft. His masonic certificates, carefully docketed, lie before me as I write.—G. W. E. R.

to God I knew how to rouse them to dutiful exertion. I am always trying to interest them in conversation."

When staying with the Gladstones at Hawarden: "No letter from any of my boys, and much dispirited. Oh that they were like these boys! No smoking; intellectual, etc."

But, though the sons were not like the young Gladstones, they were enthusiastic sportsmen, and their home at Lavington gave them excellent opportunities for shooting. On the 1st of September they used to start at 3.30 A.M., and toil manfully over the Downs and stubbles as long as daylight lasted. "No wonder that in the evening they were unable to keep awake while their father read them masterpieces of English poetry." A lady who, as a girl, was often the Bishop's guest used to say: "'The house was really too full of terriers.'" Another says of Basil: "He was a very attractive, handsome youth, bubbling over with merriment, the life of the party almost as much as his father. I remember asking another youth there what he meant to be, and what a joke it seemed when he replied that he was going to study for Orders under Basil." But it was a joke which contained an element of truth.

When Basil Wilberforce went up to Oxford he had formed no plans about his profession. On the whole he inclined towards the Bar, for which his mental quickness and his power of

ready speech were obvious qualifications. But a conversation at Nuneham with Mr William Vernon-Harcourt, then rising to eminence at the Parliamentary Bar, led him to think that the slowness of advancement in that profession would not accord with his dominant intention. He had, in ample measure, what it is the fashion of the present day to call "temperament," and he was in an unusual degree susceptible to the charms and influence of women. Before he had taken his Degree, he had resolved on early marriage, though the choice of a wife was not yet definitely made.

In 1864 the Bishop wrote to his son Reginald : "Quite between ourselves, Basil seems in a much steadier and more serious mood than I have ever known him. He is very seriously deliberating with himself whether he shall take Holy Orders."

On the 18th of June 1865, Basil wrote as follows to his brother Reginald :—

"I quite endorse all you say about an idle life. I feel sure it would be a wretched life ; but that depends upon what you mean by an idle life—if you mean not working for your living, I do not the least agree with you. A man may lead a very happy and a very useful life, and yet not do anything in the shape of work, if he is religious and looking to something beyond the mere enjoyment of this life ; but that, of course, would not do for

me. I have almost decided upon taking Orders. I have nothing more to give up besides hunting, which will be a severe struggle, as it is the only thing I really care about, but of course that can follow suit—my doubt is at present whether it is my vocation or not, and before I am ordained I mean to live for a short time in some parish and do lay work, visiting the sick, etc., to see if I can really conscientiously adopt the profession. . . . I got through 2nd Schools last Friday week, and I put on my Bachelor's gown on Thursday next.¹ I am really much better, thank God. All well at home, and the governor in great form."

At this point the reader must be introduced to the lady who for forty-four years was the guiding star of Basil's life.

In 1865 the Warden of All Souls College was the Rev. Francis Knyvett Leighton, who had married Catherine St Leger. Mrs Leighton had a sister, wife of Captain Thomas Netherton Langford, R.N., and mother of three daughters, of whom the eldest, Caroline Charlotte Jane, was staying with her uncle and aunt at All Souls for the "Commemoration" of 1865. Basil Wilberforce met Miss Langford at the Masonic Ball, promptly fell in love with her, and proposed to her at Ryde in the following August. On the 30th of the month the Bishop wrote: "I am returning to Lavington to be

¹ He took his M.A. in 1867, and his D.D. in 1894.

introduced to Charlotte Langford, to whom Basil has engaged himself, and who comes to stay, with her mother and sisters, to be made known to us. I hear that she is pretty, well-principled, and clever. Basil says he is in love with her mind, not her body."

Again, on the 1st of October: "Dear Basil and his Charlotte have been here for a week. Basil is *very* fond of her—more and more, he says. He says she is very reserved, very religious, very thoughtful and affectionate. She seems to be good-tempered, with a good deal of self-command, fond of Basil: and I have not made out for myself a good deal more."

But there was "a good deal more" to be found under that reserved exterior—shrewdness, organizing power, and an uncommon tenacity of purpose. Yet another aspect is revealed in the following letter from one who was a contemporary and a friend both of Basil and of his bride-elect:—

"DEAR MISS LANGFORD,—Let me congratulate you on your approaching marriage, in which, I assure you, I take the greatest interest. I want very much to know what 'dear Aunt Katty'¹ says about it.

"I will allow that, with the exception of her owner, nothing can excel your beautiful chestnut mare: but as for my giving £180 for

¹ Mrs Leighton.

a hack, in my reduced and embarrassed circumstances, it is simply impossible, added to which I have four horses already, and can afford to keep no more.

“So the poor parson’s wife is going to be economical! No more 200-guinea hacks; no more pearl-grey dresses from Paris, to be worn but once. Talking of which gay city, I remember I go there next week, and I believe the number of your dainty hand is $5\frac{3}{4}$ —is it not?

“Pray remember me to your parents and sisters, and believe me, yours very sincerely,

“N.”

It is not surprising that some of those who had known Miss Langford in her bright girlhood should have “felt for her,” when she was “plunged all at once into the midst of clerical life”; but those who knew her best “predicted that she would adapt herself perfectly to what might be required of her”; and the prediction was amply fulfilled.

The following letter is eminently characteristic of the hand that penned it:—

“Sept. 20, 1865.

“MY DEAR BASIL WILBERFORCE,—I ought long ago to have thanked you for your very kind letter, which gave me great pleasure and hope. But now I am writing, having heard from your good father, to offer you my most sincere congratulations on your happy prospects

of marriage. This does indeed look like an encouraging blessing—it is always so when we give up what we love to God, He restores it an hundredfold. You have given Him yourself, and He has given you back your life and another life besides, because He might have taken you away ; but now it seems you are to live, and to live with Him, and with another from Him and in Him—this is real life, real happiness. Only now we must work all the harder, for you have indeed a wonderful work before you. Let this encourage you to spare yourself in no way in your preparation for His service. You will at least have the Heart, Mind, Soul, of *one* to hold, to frame, to pray for. What need you will have at once of Purity, Wisdom, Power of Prayer! Nothing, I think, makes one long so much to be at one with God as the hope that one's prayer may there be acceptable for those we love.

“This year may do great things, and then you must both together live and grow in wisdom and love, and be ready to hold, and frame, and pray for those whom God may give you.

“This does indeed open up wonderful thoughts of the future, which reach on into Eternity—for marriage is God's appointed way of adding to the number of the Eternal Beings, of preparing the Jewels for the Crown of Christ ; it is nothing less ; it has always appeared to me a wonderful thing.

“Now I must say goodbye. I will not fail

to remember you *both* that you may be filled with His wisdom and His love.

"I am, my dear Basil Wilberforce, yours most sincerely and affectionately,

"EDWARD KING."

In the year 1865, Queen Emma of the Sandwich Islands, widow of the king who had imported Anglicanism into Hawaii, paid a visit to England in order to raise funds for the maintenance of the Hawaian Church. She stayed with the Bishop of Oxford, both at Cuddesdon and at Lavington, and accompanied him on a round of meetings in the manufacturing districts of the North, where great collections were made for this Hawaian Mission. The Bishop thus describes her: "She is about as dark as a Portuguese, with nice features and expression of countenance. . . . Basil calls her, of course, the Queen of Sheba."

The following letter belongs to this period :—

"CLARIDGE'S HOTEL,

"Nov. 25, 1865.

"MY DEAR MR BASIL WILBERFORCE,—It is with real disappointment that I write at this late hour my regrets for not being able to come to your wedding. The hour is late, because I have been trying to make it possible for me to be present on that day. Before your invitation arrived, Lord Clarendon had waited on me with a message from the Queen to spend the

27th and 28th with her at Windsor, which I immediately accepted. On inquiring of those who are often there if it is advisable to come away early in the morning, they all tell me it is the usual thing for her visitors to leave after lunch. Though prevented from coming, which I much regret, I am not prevented from approaching that same altar together with you both in fervent prayers at that time for your united happiness and long life.

“May I send kind wishes and congratulation to the young lady, and believe me ever to be yours very faithfully,
EMMA.”

Basil Wilberforce and Charlotte Langford were married, by his father, at St Paul's, Knightsbridge, on the 28th of November 1865, and the date was ever afterwards noted in the bridegroom's diary as *Dies Sanctissima*.

Basil Wilberforce was now in the rather unsatisfactory position of a married man without a profession, and without a home of his own. He and his wife lived in the “Palace” at Cuddesdon, and had it pretty much to themselves, for the Bishop was constantly away, and they occupied their time in preparations for Basil's ordination. Basil attended lectures at the Theological College which his father had established in the grounds of the Palace, and at home was busy with Hooker and Pearson. His young wife used to read with him and to him, and by her bright intelligence

lightened the load of solid theology, which Basil, who by nature was not a student, might otherwise have found oppressive.

On the 4th of July 1866, Mrs Wilberforce gave birth to her first child, Herbert William;¹ and on the 15th of August the Bishop wrote: "Basil and Charlotte and their little Herbert are now all established at Cuddesdon, and doing well. Bas is beginning lectures again in College. He seems now very much set on ordination."

On the 5th of December, the Rev. J. R. Woodford (afterwards Bishop of Ely) wrote as follows from Cuddesdon to Bishop Wilberforce, whose chaplain and intimate friend he was:—

"I am enjoying my stay here very much. Nothing can be kinder and nicer than Basil. We have long talks every evening upon theological subjects. He seems to me to be deeply interested in the points which his new line of reading is opening out to him, and I think you would have been made very happy by some things which he said last night touching upon his own personal feelings and convictions."

In Lent, 1867, Bishop Wilberforce held his ordination at Chipping Norton. On the 8th

¹ Now Brigadier-General Wilberforce, C.B. The other children were: Isabel Constance, born and died in 1868, and Violet Mary, born in 1872, now the wife of the Rev. E. H. Kennedy.

of March he wrote thus in his diary: "The ordination advancing well. Dearest Bas doing very well; placed at the top of all after careful scrutiny of all papers—he modestly wishing to have Warre¹ at least *æquales*."

On Sunday the 17th of March, the Bishop writes: "I ordained my Basil with great comfort. What an answer to prayer!"²

One who had known Basil Wilberforce as an undergraduate wrote thus of him at a later period: "It seemed to me probable that his whole view of the seriousness and duties of life had so much changed since his early days, that college life was not the bright spot in his memory which it remains in the life of many men."

As soon as he was ordained, Basil was licensed to the curacy of Cuddesdon, of which Edward King, Principal of the Theological College and afterwards Bishop of Lincoln, was Vicar. "He was devoted to his work, and beloved by the parishioners." At the same time he became his father's Domestic Chaplain, and he had fifteen months theological reading in preparation for the priesthood. He was ordained Priest by his father in the Parish

¹ Edmond Warre, afterwards Head Master and Provost of Eton.

² Basil Wilberforce, before his ordination, had made his first confession—to the Rev. Robert Milman, then Vicar of Great Marlow, and afterwards Bishop of Calcutta.

Church of Cuddesdon, on Trinity Sunday, 7th of June 1868. In after-years he told the present writer that the first time he celebrated the Holy Communion he took the eastward position, and that he had never varied his practice in this respect.¹

¹ Though urged by Dean Bradley to do so, when he became Canon of Westminster.

CHAPTER II

ST MARY'S

THE first and second years of Basil Wilberforce's ministry passed uneventfully, but, by the time that the third year began, there were changes in the air.

There had long been a close and affectionate friendship between Bishop Wilberforce and Mr Gladstone. The Bishop was not much of a politician; but, as far as he was interested in politics, he sympathized with the Peelite wing of the Conservative party. In after-years, Archbishop Tait, when commenting on the Bishop's Life, wrote thus: "It is impossible not to be struck with the extraordinary influence which he acquired over Lord Aberdeen, and with the intimacy of his relations with all the politicians of the Aberdeen school." Of that school by far the most important member was Gladstone, who sat for the University of Oxford from 1847 to 1865, and whose devoted Churchmanship attached the Bishop strongly to his side.

Early in the session of 1868, Gladstone, then M.P. for South Lancashire, and leader of the Liberal Opposition in the House of Commons, began his attack on the establishment of the Irish Church. He won the General Election of that year on the cry of Irish disestablishment, and became Prime Minister for the first time in December. As soon as the new Parliament met, he brought in his Bill for total disestablishment and partial disendowment. Bishop Wilberforce, who had not sympathized with the beginning of the attack, regarded the result of the General Election as decisive; and, having done as much as he could for the Irish Church in 1868, he offered no opposition to the Bill of 1869, which became law on the 26th of July. On this occasion the Bishop wrote to a friend: "This Irish Church work has been specially annoying at every turn. It was a bad cause to fight, and a worse to yield."

The Bishop had been sorely disappointed in 1862, when Palmerston declined to make him Archbishop of York, and again in 1868 when Disraeli, in the last days of his premiership, passed him over both for Canterbury and for London. But, now that Gladstone was Prime Minister, it was certain that these wrongs would be, as far as was possible, redressed; it was known that the aged Bishop Sumner intended to resign the See of Winchester; and there was a general expectation that Bishop Wilberforce would

succeed him. The expectation was fulfilled in the autumn of 1869, and on the 16th of December Samuel Wilberforce was enthroned in Winchester Cathedral.

This event had an important bearing on Basil Wilberforce's life. Three years before, the Bishop had bestowed the living of Middleton Stoney, near Bicester, on his son Ernest. Now Ernest decided to resign Middleton, and the Bishop asked him to take the post of Domestic Chaplain, which Basil had held ever since his ordination. Moved by a natural desire to make some provision for his youngest son, who would otherwise be homeless, the Bishop proposed that Basil should succeed his brother at Middleton; but Basil felt a strong repugnance to the proposed course. His feeling may be inferred from the following letter, written by the Rev. H. P. Liddon on the 23rd of October 1869.

“I cannot help thinking that you are right. I don't like to use the word ‘Simoniactal’ in the matter; but the arrangement would, I think, expose the Bishop to misconstruction, and, at a time when everything of the kind is jealously watched, would be relentlessly used against him. Had the arrangement been made before the Bishop's acceptance of the See of Winchester, there would have been little to say against it.

“But don't take my opinion for more than it is worth in such a matter, that is, for very little indeed.”

Basil stuck to his text. When his father migrated from Cuddesdon Palace to Winchester House,¹ he went to Seaton, in North Devon, and after a few months' work there among the fisher-folk, he became Curate of St Jude's, Southsea, which was in his father's new diocese. In 1871 the Bishop wrote in his diary: "My Basil esteemed, and making his way"; and, after preaching at St Jude's: "Great congregation. All highly esteem Bas. The Vicar said, 'If only Basil could be incumbent, and I curate under him!'"

Early in 1871, one of the most important benefices in the Diocese of Winchester—the Rectory of St Mary's, Southampton—became vacant; and, undeterred by charges of nepotism, Bishop Wilberforce resolved to bestow it on his youngest son.² It is worthy of note that he had himself been designated for this benefice by Bishop Sumner, who wrote to him as follows on the 4th of February 1837: "I have proposed, whenever the time comes, to place you at St Mary's, Southampton."³

It now fell to the lot of the younger prelate to inform "the Patriarch," as he always called Bishop Sumner, that he meant to put his

¹ Bishop Sumner, on resigning his See, retained Farnham Castle for his life.

² A writer in the *Nonconformist* referred to this resolution as "Wilberforce's Practical View," in allusion to the book of that name by the Bishop's father.

³ *Life of Bishop Wilberforce*, vol. i., p. 103.

youngest son in the place once designated for himself. The information produced the following letter from the Rev. J. M. Sumner to Bishop Wilberforce:—

“FARNHAM CASTLE, SURREY,
“*March 31, 1871.*

“MY DEAR LORD,—My father was very much pleased to hear from yourself this morning of your appointment to St Mary's, Southampton.

“Of course, the mere fact that the new rector is your son will be the cause of some outcry; nor do I suppose that any appointment which you could have made would be free from criticism. If I may be allowed to say so without presumption, I am glad that you have had the moral courage to disregard what will be only the passing talk of the day. No one can know your son's powers and disposition and earnestness better than yourself, and I have no doubt that by the faithfulness of his ministry, his devotion to his work, and his conciliatory conduct, he will justify your choice, even to those who might at first cavil at it.

“These feelings are entertained by my father as well as by myself.

“I was not at all surprised at the announcement in your letter this morning, and I earnestly trust that a ministry in which you will be so deeply interested may be abundantly

blessed to one of the most important parishes in your diocese.—I am, my dear Lord, yours affectionately,

“J. M. SUMNER.”

An old friend of the Bishop—the Rev. George Williams, the great authority on the Eastern Church—after a careful review of all the circumstances, “pronounced the appointment not only good, but wise and right, so that you may say to him, Go, and the Lord be with thee.” “It was not,” he adds, “the adversaries’ malevolent carping that I was thinking of. You have learnt to despise that, as you ought. I was afraid the feeling among staunch friends would be, ‘I wish he hadn’t done that.’ Dr Carey’s¹ most admirable and sensible letter removes that apprehension altogether, and reconciles your duty and inclination most completely. So *felix faustumque sit, precor*, and, if I mistake not, in three years’ time Dissent-ridden (and, *pace* Dr Carey, Puritan-ridden) Southampton will be quite a different place. But what a work Basil has before him! May he have all the grace and wisdom requisite for such an arduous post.”

Basil’s old tutor, the Rev. Lewis Owen, wrote as follows:—

“I heard from Ernest this morning that you are really going to St Mary’s, and I most

¹ Dr Carey was Vicar of St Paul’s, Southampton, and Rural Dean; an old-fashioned High Churchman.

earnestly hope that you are acting wisely, and will have God's blessing poured down upon you abundantly ; but there is no mistake about its being a *very* weighty charge, and there will be many adversaries.

“Still, the experience you have picked up lately will be now very valuable, and the great responsibility will make you older by many years in a very short time. It is not an easy work to follow such men as the two or three last incumbents were—thorough partisans who must have left many firm friends behind them—but I hope and believe you will resolve from the very beginning to take up real hard practical work amongst the poor and in the schools, which is congenial to you and to Mrs Basil ; and never allow yourself to be drawn by any amount of persecution or annoyance to touch the subjects of controversy in the pulpit, or in private conversation, bearing in mind that many ears will be open to catch up all unguarded words, and spiteful tongues will be waiting to carry about tales to trouble and hinder you.

“If you can but resist the temptation of replying to weak opponents, and will stick vigorously to the parish, knowing nothing of Party conflicts, and allowing a considerable amount of indulgence to the friends of your predecessors, who were good men of quite another stamp, you will succeed. I hope your health will stand the wear and tear.”

The Rev. R. R. Chope, Vicar of St Augustine's, Queen's Gate, wrote :—

“If it be really so—that you have accepted St Mary's, Southampton—I bid you God-speed with all my heart. I know that He has a work for you in His Church to bring souls to Him. It rejoices me much to have you settled down as spiritual head of a Parish. You will find it a glorious opportunity for your own soul ; and, did one only feel sufficient for it, there is no sphere of usefulness so great, so blessed, and so ripening, as that of a Parish Priest.”

Archdeacon Utterton¹ wrote from the Close at Winchester (in which Basil Wilberforce was born) :—

“Allow me most sincerely and heartily to congratulate you on your appointment to St Mary's, Southampton. It is a large and most important sphere of influence, into which I know you will throw all your energies and powers, and earnestly do I pray that you may be blessed and prospered in your work there, and that Mrs Wilberforce and you may enjoy many years of happiness in your new and delightful home—for such it is. I only wish the church was as satisfactory, but I doubt not you will be able to effect some improvement there.”

¹ Afterwards Bishop of Guildford.

From an old friend in the Diocese of Oxford came this word of cheer :—

“ I cannot help taking pen in hand to say how glad I am that the Bishop has presented you to the living, and that you have accepted it.

“ Your work at Southsea has somewhat prepared you for town work. You appear to have got on famously and to have made yourself very popular. God grant that you may be equally successful in your new sphere of duty.

“ As for anyone finding fault with your Father for giving you the Living, I think it is most uncharitable and unkind. Is a Bishop's son to be the only person who is not eligible for a living in his Father's gift? After you have been working in the Diocese, and have justly obtained a good name, it would have been unnatural, to say the least of it, to pass you over. However, I have heard but one opinion in these parts, and that is that the Bishop has done *quite right*; and, if some disappointed clergymen in the Winchester Diocese are a little put out at first, they will soon see the matter in a proper light. I fear a large and poor Town Parish is not so good as it looks. What with curates, schools, and charities, the income is soon cut down, and I am sure it is not income that tempts people to take a large Town Living with all its cares and responsibilities, but a wish to perform a large amount of work. That, I am sure, is your

feeling on the subject, and I trust that your health may be equal to your love of work."

On the 1st of April 1871, Bishop Wilberforce's diary records: "Basil collated in St Mary's, Southampton"; and, on the 26th: "A charming letter from Bas. Full of hopes. Answer to prayer."

The new Rector was inducted on the 3rd of June, and on Sunday evening, the 4th (having "read himself in" at the morning service), he preached his first sermon in St Mary's.¹ He took two texts—Ezekiel iii. 20, and Ezekiel xx. 49: "Because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand"; "Then said I, Ah Lord God! they say of me, Doth he not speak parables?" His opening words were these: "It is hardly possible that any can hear these striking passages I have just read from the Word of God without perceiving their peculiar application to the circumstances under which I stand before you to-day." His closing words were these: "Let us implore the aid of the Lord Jesus Christ, beseeching Him to send amongst us His Holy Spirit to guide and bless all our efforts, and to lead us ultimately into all truth, that, in the end, when our Blessed Lord comes

¹ The Bishop wrote in his diary for this day: "Thinking much and praying much for Bas."

in His glory to gather in His own redeemed, and when the recording angel opens the book of judgment, not one of us who have knelt together in this parish church may be found wanting, but that the sentence of the Judge may be : ‘ Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.’—Amen.”

This sermon was preached in a pulpit of the “three-decker” type, sixteen feet high, scaled by a staircase of fourteen steps ; stretching eight yards from east to west, and rendering the Holy Table invisible. The church was worthy of the pulpit, being a Georgian structure of indescribable hideousness ; but in other respects the benefice possessed many amenities, for the income was abundant, and the rectory-house, strangely called “The Deanery,” was large and commodious, standing in delightful grounds. It was originally a chantry of St Denys Priory, and some remains of the mediæval building are still visible.¹

The Bishop’s care for his beloved son did not stop short at his preferment. He used all his influence to bring the young Rector of St Mary’s into social relations with pleasant houses in the adjacent County ; he consulted Sir Thomas Watson, President of the College of Physicians, about the best doctors in Southampton ; and he did his utmost, by

¹ The famous Football Club of Southampton was originally the St Mary’s Parochial Club, and Wilberforce allowed it to practise in the grounds of the Deanery.

personal exertion, to start his son's new work auspiciously.

On the 18th of August 1871 he wrote in his diary: "Southampton. Wrote and prepared sermon for St Mary's, Southampton. Much moved, and prayed hard for first sermon there in Bas's ministry. Preached on 'He that teacheth.' Sunday School conference."

"*August 19.* — Basil had clerical party to meet me. All went off pleasantly."

"*August 20.* — Early Communion. Prepared my sermon on Naaman. Walked with Basil and C[harlotte] to countless schools for two hours. Saw poor dying man. Intensely tired. Preached evening on Jehu. Large congregation. I trust impressed. Churchwardens to supper."

"*Sept. 21.* — Warmly received by dear Bas, and everything cared for by her."

On Sunday the 24th of September the Bishop held his ordination in St Mary's, and on the 31st he wrote in his diary: "Southampton. Examined God's House with Basil."

This examination of God's House led to prompt and drastic changes. The towering pulpit was lowered, and removed from its central position; the reading-desk was abolished; the floor of the chancel was raised, and choir-stalls were placed in it; the space inside the altar-rails was tiled; a reredos was erected; and the organ, enlarged and improved, was removed from the west gallery to the

south side of the chancel. The new Rector discarded the black gown, then so dear to the Puritan heart, and from the first preached in his surplice—his “white surplice,” as the local papers called it¹—and clad in similar garments his new choir, forty-four strong. The alterations were completed in time for Advent Sunday, December 3, when Charles Kingsley preached in the morning, and Bishop Wilberforce in the evening. The new order at St Mary's may be dated from this day.

The National School-master, at his first interview with the new Rector, said in a rather patronizing tone, “Well, Sir, I think you will do”: which brought this characteristic answer—“I have been thinking the matter over, and I have made up my mind to allow you to remain as School-master.” From that moment the two men understood one another, and were the best of friends.

At this period of his life, Basil Wilberforce was, theologically, what his father had made him. The Bishop had been trained in that more churchmanlike school of Evangelicalism which had its centre at Clapham, and had by degrees advanced to the position of a moderate High Churchman. He clung unwaveringly to the best and essential part of the Evangelical system—the conviction of sin and the need of a Saviour—and to this he gradually added a

¹ He subsequently introduced coloured stoles, and this was the summit of his ritualism.

sacramental theology, guarded but orthodox, with a taste for church-restoration and for modest ceremonial. Basil Wilberforce had been brought up in a circle where his father's lightest word was, theologically, law; he was bound to that father by the closest ties of mutual affection, and he had inherited several of his gifts. Physically, he did not much resemble the bishop, being taller and more gracefully built, with a more regular profile. The wide mouth, supposed to be characteristic of the orator, he had inherited; but his brow was nobler, and his aspect more refined. His inward resemblances to his father were unmistakable. He had the same exquisite gift of sympathy; the same power of attracting affection; the same effervescent humour; the same tendency to be all things to all men; the same love of his fellow-creatures in that wide sense of the term which includes, not only humanity, but all that God has made. One of his early friends records: "There is one point in his character which first struck me at Oxford—his great love of, and sympathy with, lower animals"—and this trait continued with him till the end.

Then again, he resembled his father in the eagerness of his temperament. When he thought an object right or desirable, he could not rest till he had attained it; and, at least in his earlier days, he was apt to begin building his towers without counting the cost, and to

go to war without reckoning the forces opposed to him.

And yet again—and this conspicuously—he had inherited from his father and grandfather the great gift of natural eloquence, enhanced by one of the most beautiful voices ever heard in public, and by all the accessories of carriage and gesture. But this eloquence was rather his master than his servant, and was apt to carry him beyond the limits alike of accurate statement and of argumentative cogency.

This combination of qualities was bound to secure him a wide popularity ; and at the same time to provoke a narrow but determined hostility. Both of these results were soon visible in Southampton, and we will take the hostility first. A curate resigned, feeling that to remain in office under the new Rector would be “no longer consistent with his religious principles,” and joined the “Free Church of England.” One Sunday School teacher was driven away by horror of the surplice in the pulpit ; another by the “prominence assigned to the doctrine of the Sacraments.” A seat-holder of fifty years’ standing forsook the Church as a protest against a Metrical Litany at a Lenten Service ; a neighbouring clergyman brought railing accusations against a “Catechist’s Manual,” authorized by Bishop Wilberforce, and a “Communicant’s Manual,” compiled by Edward King ; and, when the Ruridecanal Chapter discussed “the right use of Confession in the

Church of England," such well-known scribes as "Protestant," "Paterfamilias," and "Vox Clamantis," warned Southampton against the dark designs of the new Rector and his colleagues.

On the other side, there were unmistakable signs of popularity and success. St Mary's church, which for some time had been rather sparsely attended, was now crowded. The "weekly offertory," collected in alms-bags, soon exceeded the products of the discarded "plate." Mission-Chapels were opened in poverty-stricken districts. A fresh life was felt in all the schools, where the new Rector, with his genuine love of children, was peculiarly at home. A "Choral Association," a "Young Men's Mutual Improvement Society," a "Maternity Society," and an "Industrial Society" for providing poor women with needlework, were set on foot and vigorously worked. Wilberforce gathered round him a band of zealous and efficient curates;¹ and, in all such labours as fall within a woman's sphere, Mrs Wilberforce was her husband's tactful and untiring helper. Even in quarters where the new order was severely criticized, there was a cordial recognition of the new Rector's courtesy, good humour, and liberality.

At every turn in the various difficulties which always attend a work of reconstruction,

¹ Here let two names be recorded—William Willcox Perrin, Bishop of Willesden, formerly Bishop of British Columbia; and Benedict George Hoskyns, Archdeacon of Hastings,

Wilberforce had the invaluable aid of his father's sympathy and experience. The Bishop, having no official residence in the diocese,¹ made Southampton his head-quarters, and had a room permanently set apart for him in the Deanery. Besides ordaining and confirming in St Mary's, he constantly preached and lectured there, took part in the regular services, and by his presence sanctioned the changes which were made. What the Bishop approved and encouraged, the Rector could not be reasonably blamed for practising.

Some extracts from the Bishop's diary may be here inserted :—

“1872. *March* 29 (Good Friday). . . . Southampton by 4, and at $\frac{1}{2}$ -past Confirmation of adults at St Mary's. Most interesting and most encouraging results of dearest Bas's labours—God bless him. Then walked in garden and wrote a little, and then preached on Isaiah liii. 4. Dearest Bas pleased.”

“*March* 31 (*Southampton*). — Up early. Prepared morning sermon on ‘Came Jesus.’ Wrote. An interesting morning congregation and Communion. Thank God nearly trebled communicants in the year. . . . Walked with Bas to water-side, beautiful evening. I preached again on Jesus and Resurrection. Grand congregation, and very attentive. The chancel wonderfully improved. Reredos.”

¹ Bishop Sumner, who retained Farnham Castle for his life, survived his successor.

“*Nov.* 10.—Prepared and preached at St Mary’s to volunteer Riflemen. Large attendance. ‘Unto a perfect man.’ Wrote a little, Basil with me.”

“*Dec.* 18.—Heard Basil lecture — bold, manly, unpugnacious. A great deal of power ; so Woodford¹ also judged.”

On Christmas Eve he held his Advent Ordination in St Mary’s church. On the 28th of December, he wrote : “Bas so worn by his work and its anxieties. Yet, Praise the Lord, O my soul.”

On the 10th of April 1873, the entry is : “Southampton. Lecture on Catacombs. Large attendance and well received. Tried to keep line of Church, as against Rome and Dissent. Bas a cold, alas !”

These entries, to which many might be added, exhibit not only the writer’s almost feminine tenderness, but also his constant desire to help his youngest son in the difficult work to which he had called him. The Bishop’s support was gratefully recognized by all who had the interests of St Mary’s at heart, and all was going well when a sudden and heavy blow fell upon the parish, the diocese, and the whole Church of England.

On Saturday afternoon, July 19, 1873, the Bishop was killed by a fall from his horse, while riding among the Surrey Hills. The fatal

¹ J. R. Woodford, the Bishop’s Chaplain ; afterwards Bishop of Ely.

news reached Basil Wilberforce on the evening of the same day, while he was preparing his sermon for the morrow. By a difficult and crooked journey, travelling through the night, he reached Sir Thomas Farrer's house at Abinger, where the Bishop's body lay. To the end of his life he referred to that experience as a heart-breaking calamity. "I could not understand it then," he used to say, "but I can understand it now." His father's support being removed, he was forced to stand alone, and the full vigour of his ministry dated from that sad day. "He then vowed a great oath to Almighty God that he would justify his father's appointment."¹

The death of Bishop Wilberforce evoked a remarkable display of sympathy and regret. He had friends in every part of the country, and in all classes of society; and even those who disapproved of his ecclesiastical methods were forward to admit that he had been for forty years a conspicuous figure in the religious and social life of England.

Memorials to his character and work sprang up in various localities with which he had been more or less connected; and Basil Wilberforce determined that, as far as Southampton was concerned, the memorial should be a new St

¹ Bishop Wilberforce was succeeded in the See of Winchester by the Bishop of Ely, Edward Harold Browne, who in 1876 appointed Basil Wilberforce to an Honorary Canonry in Winchester Cathedral.

Mary's church. In proposing this scheme, he was able to reinforce himself by a strong argument. "It was," he said, "the great wish of the late bishop that St Mary's should be rebuilt; and early in 1873 he asked the eminent Mr Street, as Diocesan Architect, to give him an opinion as to the capabilities of the building, either for repairs or otherwise."

This was Mr Street's report: "I think I have never seen a church so ill calculated for use as a church. It is mean, ugly, and inconvenient in the highest degree. The state of the fabric is not good. It would, I fear, be impossible to make any alterations in the existing building which would make it in any degree worthy of its purpose; and the money spent on such alterations would be, in a sense, thrown away, as such improvements could only be considered at the best as temporary expedients."

Having regard to this opinion, Basil Wilberforce boldly determined to build a new church. His first plan had been to choose a fresh site, but various difficulties intervened, and it was eventually decided to erect the new building piecemeal, joining it to the old. This decision was adopted by the Vestry in 1876, and the work was immediately put in hand. The first stone of the new portion was laid by the Prince of Wales on the 12th of August 1878, "in memory of Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Winchester"; and on the 19th of

June 1879, the eastern half and the chancel having been rebuilt, the church was "re-consecrated" by Bishop Harold Browne, in the presence of the two Primates. Archbishop Tait preached in the morning, and Archbishop Thomson in the evening.¹

While the material reconstruction of St Mary's was in progress, the spiritual atmosphere of the place was undergoing a similar change. Each year witnessed some important development in the order of the services, in the frequency of Celebrations,² and in the penitential use of Lent. In Lent 1876, a successful mission was conducted at St Mary's by the Rev. George Body ; and, as Mission-work and Confession are closely allied, this may be a convenient place for inserting a letter which was written by Wilberforce in 1873. The Bishop of Brechin³ had commended to his spiritual care a lady who had come to live in Southampton, and who was in the habit of confessing before each Communion. This was his reply : "The Rev. B. Wilberforce presents his compliments to the Bishop of Brechin, and begs to assure him that he will render most gladly any spiritual assistance in his power to Mrs H——, consistent with

¹ A conspicuous feature of the new St Mary's was a "Grave-Font" for baptism by immersion. Basil Wilberforce took lessons from C. H. Spurgeon in this method of baptizing.

² The early Celebration every Sunday was begun in 1871.

³ A. P. Forbes.

the doctrine and practice of the Reformed Church.

“With the most firm belief in the great value of the Ministry of Reconciliation, he nevertheless entertains the deepest conviction that *habitual confession* is most injurious to the spiritual life, and entirely contrary to the teaching of the Reformation; and he could not therefore encourage Mrs H—— or anyone else to come to Confession before every Communion.”

But, in spite of this moderate and thoroughly Anglican line, the changes at St Mary's were not effected without unreasonable and bitter opposition. On the 14th of January 1877, Father Benson of Cowley wrote a letter which indicates pretty clearly the circumstances in which Wilberforce had approached him:—

“I will send you Father Black to conduct the Three Hours on Good Friday, and I think you will find him do it in such a way as to win your people, in the power of God's grace. If you have been fighting beasts at Ephesus, I hope that some of the ‘First Love’ of that highly favoured Church is also lingering on at Southampton in spite of difficulties. I hope that some of those who do not yet so much as know whether there be any Holy Ghost may be willing to be taught.”

In a later chapter we shall see that, at this period, Wilberforce's theology was undergoing

some disturbance. The following letters from his uncle, Cardinal Manning, have their interest as bearing on this point¹:—

“August 14, 1877.

“It would give me much pleasure to see you all, though you are a sad medley of schism, rationalism, and ambition. This last is for Charlotte.”

“August 31, 1877.

“No ambition is from the Holy Ghost, except St Paul’s—‘This one thing I do, forgetting the things that are behind and reaching forth to the things that are before.’ Do this with all your might, and it will correct the faults in you which you think ambition would cure. It would only make them fester. By rationalism I mean a Christianity which rests upon human authority. And by schism you know what I mean. There are no knots in ‘one is one.’ But you will slip like an eel.

“My love to Charlotte, and a blessing to you both. Go both of you and pray before the Blessed Sacrament. Think of your own two souls, and never mind what others are about.”

¹ Henry Edward Manning married Caroline Sargent, younger sister of Mrs Samuel Wilberforce.

CHAPTER III

TEETOTALISM

WHEN Basil Wilberforce died, one of his contemporaries at Oxford wrote: "What has always most interested me has been the way that *determination that the right should prevail* gradually grew into the *Perseverance* (Eph. vi. 18) and *Steadfastness* (Romans xii. 12, and Col. iv. 2) for which he was so well known among his intimate friends. I used to mark how his (one might call it) obstinacy gradually became προσκαρτέρησις, the *determination* to fight the good fight to the last man and the last shilling."

This element in his character played an important part in his career at Southampton. Had he confined himself to his strictly pastoral work, preaching the Word and ministering the Sacraments, renovating the material structure of his church, developing its internal life, and guiding the souls of his people, he might, when once the foolish suspicion of "Popery" had subsided, have attained his objects with com-

parative ease. But the "determination that the right should prevail" led him, soon and suddenly, into a course of action which was certain to excite the most virulent opposition, and to react unfavourably on his strictly ecclesiastical work.

When Joseph Chamberlain, at the outset of his public career, was recommending the Gothenburg system of Licensing, he showed that Southampton stood third on the list of drink-ridden towns, Canterbury and Cambridge alone surpassing it. In Southampton, the proportion of Public Houses to population was 1 for every 110, while 1 person out of every 120 was charged with drunkenness. The moral and social condition which these figures imply weighed heavily on the Rector of St Mary's, whose parish contained some of those districts where the evils of drunkenness are most clearly and most deplorably visible. While he was musing on the evil the fire burned, and at last he spake with his tongue. The fire was kindled, and the tongue was loosed, by a very trivial incident. The Bishop of Willesden, then curate of St Mary's, gives this account of it: "In October 1873, Basil and I went to a small Temperance Meeting in Dock Street, addressed by a young book-seller. It was the *first* Temperance Meeting either of us attended, and after that evening *we never tasted alcohol*. He came home to supper with me, and there was claret on the table, but it was not

touched. 'The St Mary's Total Abstinence Branch of the C.E.T.S. was founded on the 23rd of November, when he and I together signed the pledge." Soon after, Wilberforce joined the "Blue Ribbon Army," led by Mr Richard Booth ; and later he founded the "Blue Cross Guild," over which he presided till the end of his life.

That Wilberforce should himself become an abstainer was no great matter, for an instinctive refinement of nature, coupled with a delicate digestion, made abstinence easy to him. It mattered more that he felt himself restrained from providing wine for his guests, for he was the most hospitable of men, and loved, like Charles Lamb, to taste good things "upon the tongue of his friend." But what mattered most, in its bearing on his happiness and work, was that he felt himself divinely called to a crusade against drunkenness, and threw himself into it with an uncalculating and a whole-hearted zeal. He became, at a bound, one of the most forcible and popular advocates of what was euphemistically called "'Temperance," but was really total abstinence from alcoholic drink. Like Wesley, he took the whole world for his parish. From Glasgow to Brighton, from Norwich to Cardiff, he rushed with the zeal of an apostle, preaching everywhere the gospel of social salvation by teetotalism. He was accustomed to say that he had preached for the cause in every Cathedral of England,

and in more Parish Churches than could easily be counted. His methods may be inferred from the following letter, addressed to him in 1883, after an unusually successful "Temperance Mission" at Torquay :—

"I cannot refrain from writing to you, in order to express the intense gratification I have experienced whilst attending your Mission in Torquay. A year ago a similar Mission was started here, but as I have always been a teetotaler (and therefore require no Temperance Physician), and as Temperance was the only theme dwelt upon, I could not see my way clear to join in the crusade. But you, sir, have cut the ground from under my feet, of all opposition. You have raised the platform. You cry out 'Christianity and then Temperance'; placing the noblest motive, not in the rear, but in the front. This is as it should be; and if any are inclined to doubt it, I would wish them to attend next Sunday night's Mission (Oh! that I could be there!) and listen to your beautiful eloquence, and note its effect upon the vast audience—and then see if they would be in doubt. There are other sins besides Intemperance. Your lofty policy scotches that of the great Serpent, in that it is no respecter of vices—but aims at crushing all. Noble work and grand achievement, worthy of the glorious name of Wilberforce. Another Slavery Abolition!"

Effective as a preacher, Wilberforce was even more effective as a speaker on the platform, where his signal grace of gesture could be seen, and where, unrestrained by the conventions of the pulpit, he could pour out anecdote, denunciation, sarcasm, and humour, in a swiftly-flowing stream of facile eloquence. He became a favourite orator of the United Kingdom Alliance. He patronized the milder activities of the "Church of England Temperance Society." At Church Congresses he appealed, not unsuccessfully, to the consciences of his clerical brethren; and, as years went on, he extended the field of his operations to Scotland and Ireland, to India, Canada, and the United States. His sermons, reprinted as pamphlets—"The Amethyst," "Sound the Alarm," and "Who is on the Lord's side?"—rushed into incredible circulations.

Of course, the suddenness and vehemence of this apostolate provoked amazement, ridicule, and wrath. A worthy Alderman of Southampton gave utterance to these mingled feelings at a dinner of the Licensed Victuallers' Protection Association in 1875 :—

"I am sorry in regard to one man for whom I have the greatest esteem and respect. I heard him preach a sermon only two years ago for the Good Templars—I will not mince the matter, but will say at once that he was the Rector of St Mary's—and he took his text from the chapter wherein our great Master, when at

the marriage in Cana of Galilee, turned the water into wine; and he said he could not for the life of him see that there was anything wrong in the moderate use of wine, because his great Master would never have performed this miracle if there were. You know what has happened since that time. The Rector has become a convert, but I can say nothing against him for that, as I believe he is most sincere; but my complaint is that men, having made up their minds to become Total Abstiners, try to make everyone else abstain by force of law."

Basil Wilberforce replied in a long and eloquent letter to the local press, urging the sweet reasonableness of the "Permissive Bill," and appealing, more cogently, to the Christian principle of renunciation for the benefit of others. His pen and his tongue were equally busy, and all the organs of Teetotalism rejoiced, as well they might, in this new and splendid championship.

Of course the orator got into scrapes. He would not have been himself if he had not. His figures were questioned; his facts were denied; his authorities were challenged. All sorts of grotesque stories were invented—he had beaten his dog because he saw it coming out of a Public House; he had declared that he would not give his wife a prescribed stimulant, even to save her from death. To absurdity was added baseness: for those who disliked his new activities

circulated a story that he had himself been a drunkard, and knew by experience the evil which he denounced. "This," says his contemporary, the Rev. J. J. Mallaby, "was an absolute libel. During his Oxford days, he was unusually temperate."

Then again, it was the current sarcasm in circles where his zeal was disliked to say: "Ah! there are two kinds of temperance. Wilberforce may be temperate in drink, but in speech he is most intemperate"—and this was nearer the mark. Like everyone who has a great gift of popular eloquence, he tended to exaggeration; his appeals to emotion were stronger than his appeals to reason; and his zeal often carried him into difficult positions. Messrs Gilbey were justly incensed when he quoted on a platform the ribald rhyme about the "Ten little niggers going out to dine." When, denouncing the medical use of alcohol, he said: "Some doctors, if they went down inside you with a lighted candle, could not tell what was the matter with you," he infuriated the medical profession. When he remonstrated with the Prince of Wales on the impropriety of presiding at the Annual Dinner of the Licensed Victuallers' Association, he was distinctly and not unjustly snubbed. A most injudicious reference to Queen Victoria's personal opinions drew from the Dean of Windsor¹ a reminder that "You should not bring forward

¹ G. V. Wellesley.

the Queen's name at a public meeting, unless you can announce upon authority that she is on your side of the question."

A much more serious development of Wilberforce's teetotal zeal was his desire to introduce unfermented wine into the celebration of the Holy Communion. When he was contemplating this innovation, he twice consulted Bishop Lightfoot. The bishop's replies are interesting, and the second concludes with an admonition which certainly was not, and is not, unneeded :—

"So far as I can make out, the theory that unfermented grape-juice was used at the Pass-over cannot be maintained.

"But this does not settle the question. If the clergy and church-wardens of a church in my diocese were desirous of using unfermented wine (from the juice of the grape) I should not forbid it. Whether this unfermented grape-juice be or be not wine, is more a matter of common sense than of theology.

"The objection to the use of fermented wine so very frequently rests upon a false principle, that I cannot feel any sympathy with it. The only argument which I can allow to have any weight is the practical one, from the effect which it may have, in extreme cases, of acting as a temptation to reclaimed inebriates. But in such cases light claret and water has so little resemblance in taste or smell to the strong or luscious alcoholic drinks which have led to the

sinful habit, that, if it were used, I cannot imagine any real danger.

“On the other hand, much as I may regret what I call the ‘theoretical’ scandal, I do not think it is entitled to much consideration. This would be a concession to a false principle ; and, though the Church may possibly lose some adherents for a time by not yielding to it, yet she will be justified in the end.

“How widely spread this false principle is, we have evidence every day. No one regretted more than myself the unguarded language of the Bishop of Manchester the other day¹—considering the grave interests at stake—for the base uses which it would be made to serve might have been foreseen ; but the adverse comments on it, which I have seen, have for the most part been supported by the most perverse arguments, and (to my judgment at least) the falsest principles, which drove me to despair. We want to clear the advocacy of teetotalism from this initial false assumption that alcohol is inherently evil, for it can only lead to defeat in the end.”

Another prelate—Cardinal Manning—had no hesitation in treating the point theologically. After quoting various theologians of recognized authority, he wrote : “From these principles it

¹ Dr Moorhouse, Bishop of Manchester, bore public testimony to the value of “light stimulant.” See the *Times*, Nov. 24, 1886.

is evident that mere 'juice' has not as yet the character of wine: as vinegar has it no longer.

"Do not vex yourself on this question. All wine in the Old Testament had the quality of intoxication, and all refinements upon this point are dangerous. There is no more evil in the intoxicating power of wine than in the explosive power of dynamite."

Eventually, in deference to the wish of his own Bishop, Wilberforce forbore to make the perilous change, and adopted the normal practice of celebrating with the Mixed Chalice of wine and water.

The following words of Dr Liddon, written in 1872, may be here inserted. After saying that he cannot get through his double duties as Canon of St Paul's and Ireland Professor at Oxford, without a distressing sense of the miserable way in which they are performed, he adds: "I make this confession to you, dear friend, that you may understand that it is from no lack of sympathy with, or admiration for, your noble effort to retrieve the defects and mistakes of the past in Southampton that I am kept from coming to you in Lent."

The present Rector of St Mary's—the Rev. Canon Lovett—writes as follows: "No one who knew him only in London can have any idea of the way Wilberforce impressed Southampton; so that after twenty years his influence constantly meets one—in the personalities of a great

variety of people of every class. There is no doubt that his unblenching thoroughness in his war against alcoholism weighted him heavily among large sections of the community—but his personality and eloquence in those days silenced when it did not convince. As far as I can judge, working here after the long interval, his *métier* was to inspire people rather than to instruct them, to win individuals rather than to organize corporate life. In his early days here he met with fierce opposition. The last time I saw him he said to me that his Father in those difficult times compared them to the apostolic experience when he ‘fought with beasts at Ephesus’; but he left upon Southampton an impression which will last longer than the generation to which he ministered.”

The Bishop of Willesden, who was ordained to the curacy of St Mary’s in September 1871, supplies the following memorandum:—

“From the day when we signed the pledge, it is not an exaggeration to say that the interest in the weekly Temperance Meetings and the Bands of Hope never failed. Thousands of men and women must have taken the pledge in that school-room, and hundreds privately in his study—many of whom were sad victims of the drink. If they were in earnest they always found a hearty reception, however busy he might be.

“Within a short time the Rector had preached in nearly every Cathedral in England, and his

career as a platform speaker began. Invitations poured in from every quarter, and for myself I have never heard his equal. He was wonderful; his illustrations were unique; his pathos and humour, with his beautiful voice, carried away his audience—one moment there would be roars of laughter and the next sobs. He always lifted the matter on to the highest of all lines, and preached Christ as the perfect example of sacrifice and the only Helper to those who were in the mire of the sin of drunkenness. In the 'eighties,' when the Blue Ribbon movement was at its height, I have seen men and women almost fighting in their rush to the platform to sign the pledge after he had spoken. From time to time it fell to my unhappy lot to go in his place when he was utterly unable to fulfil an engagement, and no strain on my affection was greater than when I consented. He took a strong political line in favour of Local Option, and frequently spoke at United Kingdom Alliance Meetings with Sir Wilfrid Lawson; and he entered his solemn protest against the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for the number of Public Houses which they allowed to remain on church property. He, of course, banished all intoxicating drink from his own table; and his enthusiasm and leadership years ago emphatically helped to produce the strong position held by Temperance Reformers to-day.

“Among the spiritual influences, I should place the Ten Days' Mission held in St Mary's in

1876 by Canon Body, assisted by Alfred Gurney (afterwards Vicar of St Barnabas, Pimlico). It brought to a head the teaching which had been given, and largely increased the body of devoted workers, some of whom remain to this day.

“The whole Parish was divided into three districts, each with its own Mission Hall, but the Celebrations were only held at the Parish Church, so that in a true sense the Altar became the centre of the Parish. The Children’s Services were a distinct feature, when on Sunday afternoons all the Sunday School children were gathered. The Men’s Services were also full of power. When the Rector did not speak himself, he often asked leading preachers to come, and on the first Sunday in the month the church was often filled with a congregation of 1000 men; and his week-day instructions in Advent and Lent attracted large numbers from the other parishes in the town.

“Looking back, and comparing the work in St Mary’s from 1871 to 1881 with other works that I have known, I honestly think that, for organization and spiritual influence, St Mary’s Parish was amongst the best. The true unity that existed between the Rector and his curates, his intense loyalty, his strong leadership, his loving heart—as I remember it all, while I feel intensely the loss of his presence, I do indeed thank God for a lifelong friendship, and for the early years of my ministry in St Mary’s, Southampton.”

CHAPTER IV

BROADLANDS

I HEAD this chapter with the name of a place, because that place was the source and centre of influences which had a dominating effect on the later life and ministry of Basil Wilberforce.

“Broadlands” stands on the river Test, immediately to the south of Romsey, famous for its noble Abbey; and was the home of Lord Palmerston, who died, while Prime Minister, in 1865. On the death of Lady Palmerston (who had been Lady Cowper), Broadlands passed in 1869 to her second son by her first marriage, the Right Hon. William Cowper, M.P., who thereupon assumed the additional name of Temple, was author of the “Cowper-Temple Clause” in the Education Act of 1870, and in 1880 was raised to the peerage as Lord Mount Temple.

William Cowper had what Tertullian called the *anima naturaliter Christiana*. He had been born and brought up in a worldly home, but early found the way of peace in Evangelical

religion, which he held to the end, but with a marked freedom from pharisaism and narrow-mindedness. His wife was a woman of singular beauty and dignified charm, an earnest seeker after truth, and a zealous promoter of all humane endeavours. The charms of the place, the character of the host and hostess, and the variety of interests represented under its roof, made Broadlands one of the most attractive houses in England; and its hospitable doors, distant only eight miles from Southampton, were instantly thrown open to the young Rector of St Mary's and his wife, who, from 1871 onwards, were among its most constant frequenters.

A curious development was at hand; and before long Broadlands became the scene of a religious movement, to which England has afforded no exact parallel. In 1874, some Americans, originally Quakers, who had been accustomed to attend camp-meetings in their own country, were staying in London, and wished to initiate something of the kind in England. Through common friends they made the acquaintance of Mr and Mrs Cowper-Temple, and, when they broached their plan, Mr Cowper-Temple said: "I will gladly lend you Broadlands for such a purpose, if you will arrange the meetings." Naturally, they jumped at the offer; invitations were sent out, and on the 17th of July 1874 the first "Broadlands Conference" began.

"About two hundred persons assembled,

forty or fifty as visitors in the house, others being accommodated in hotels or lodgings near ; all came thirsting for an increase of faith and love, and more communion with God and with one another."

The Conference was repeated annually, till Lord Mount Temple's death in 1888 ;¹ and a few of those who attended it may be here enumerated : Russell Gurney, M.P., Andrew Jukes, Bishop Wilkinson, Father Corbet of Stoke, Theodore Monod, Pearsall Smith, George Macdonald, Arthur Stanton, Alfred Gurney, Canon Body, Bishop Boyd-Carpenter, Lord Radstock, Ion Keith-Falconer, Roden Noel, and Edward Clifford. To these must be added Mrs Charles, authoress of *The Schönberg-Cotta Family*, Miss Charlotte Yonge, Miss Ellice Hopkins, Miss Marsh, and Madame Antoinette Sterling. It will be readily perceived that in this society there was a considerable variety of religious opinion ; and among the orators I recall a Jew who had been converted by studying the Law of Sacrifice, a negress who had been a slave, and a retired school-master who taught that sin was a disease. The discussions were animated, amiable, and desultory. No one kept to the prescribed subject. Everyone had his own gospel, and preached it. Everyone agreed immensely with the last speaker, and forthwith proceeded to launch some entirely

¹ In 1880 the scene was temporarily shifted to the Deanery at Southampton.

different theory of his own. There was no quarrelling, and the mutual admiration was perfectly sincere.

A religious newspaper, reporting the spiritual exercises of the week, concluded its notice with this characteristic touch: "We are informed that the noble host's income is not less than £30,000 a year"; and the luxurious appliances of the "Broadlands Retreat" made capital fun for people accustomed to the more austere regimen of Cowley or Keble. And yet, though it was so very easy to laugh at them, these Conferences had a real value. They brought together earnest people who certainly would never have met elsewhere. They enabled Ritualists to understand the vital element of Evangelical religion. They showed Evangelicals that Ritualists were not necessarily slaves of the husk and the letter. They opened the eyes of orthodox believers to the mysterious working of the Spirit of Truth in regions far beyond the precincts of all organized religion.

As regards the influence produced on Basil Wilberforce, the most important frequenter of Broadlands was the third Lord Radstock, who lived close to Southampton. Lord Radstock was a man of strong and simple character, "in his simplicity sublime." He had begun life as a fervent member of the Evangelical party in the Church of England, he then joined himself to the Plymouth Brethren, and he ended as a Christian unattached to any denomination.

His self-sacrificing zeal, his passionate earnestness, and his force of will, produced a strong effect on Wilberforce. A clear and concentrated mind often imposes its convictions on a more discursive intelligence, and Wilberforce's course was visibly affected by Radstock's faith and practice.

In early days at Southampton, Wilberforce had been in frequent and animated conflict with Nonconformity; but he now began to extend the right hand of fellowship to sectaries of all descriptions. C. H. Spurgeon, and Joseph Parker, and Mr R. J. Campbell of the City Temple, became in turn his friends. By way of restoring the balance, he invited Father Ignatius to preach at St Mary's, and afterwards withdrew the invitation. At one time he was invited to preach in a Presbyterian church at Glasgow, and was only dissuaded by a Scottish dignitary of the English Church, who thought that this action would widen rather than narrow the chasm between those who believe, and those who reject, the Apostolical Succession: at another, he desired that some German pastors should be permitted to preach in Westminster Abbey, and was met by the salutary reminder that such a permission "would raise an ill-feeling which is ever ready to break out in England against Germans."

He once preached in a Congregational chapel at Southampton, and by so doing drew down upon himself a grave though gentle remon-

strance from Bishop Harold Browne. The correspondence between the Bishop and the Rector was published, and it ended with these words: “One obligation is clearly binding on me—namely, the law of obedience to the plain command of my Bishop; and, if I understand your lordship not to remonstrate merely, but distinctly and authoritatively as my Bishop to forbid my preaching to my parishioners within the walls of a Nonconformist Chapel, I shall, pending the decision of a Court of Law, loyally and unhesitatingly obey you.”

The Bishop had explicitly declared that he did not rest his prohibition on legal grounds, but solely on his spiritual authority; so the “decision of a Court of Law” was never sought, and the incident passed off in a cloud of pamphlets. Newspapers published long articles on the “Exchange of Pulpits,” Convocation debated it, and Wilberforce became, at anyrate for the moment, a prime favourite in Nonconformist circles.

So far, I have traced what may be called the “lowering” influence of Broadlands on Wilberforce’s theology; but this was in its effects less permanent than the “broadening” influence which issued from the same place. Among those who frequented the Conferences, I have mentioned the Rev. R. W. Corbet (still spared to the Church), who, in 1869, founded a “Society of the Holy Spirit, for study, converse, and devotion.” It is difficult

to describe the doctrine or method of a living theologian without incurring the risk of contradiction; but I think Mr Corbet will not demur when I speak of him as being profoundly and essentially a Mystic. To analyse, with any approach to exhaustiveness, the meanings of that term would invite disputation; so here I will only say that the elements in Mr Corbet's teaching which specially appealed to Wilberforce were the keen sense of spiritual beauty, the habit of looking, through the letter, to the inner meaning, of Holy Scripture, and the deep conviction of the all-embracing and all-explaining Love of the Universal Father. As years went on, these features became more and more strongly marked in Wilberforce's ministry, and his correspondence gives abundant proof of his debt to the teaching which he had received at Broadlands.

In 1877 the Church had been agitated by some wild sermons on Eschatology, which Dr Farrar published under the title of *Eternal Hope*. In 1880, Dr Pusey, who had been hindered by illness and bereavement, published a reply: *What is of Faith as to Everlasting Punishment?* Wilberforce, who was always a good deal swayed by what was in the air, delivered in October, November, and December 1880, "A Course of Instructions upon the After-Death State." His subjects were: 1. "The Difficulty Stated"; 2. "Future Punishment; Corrective and not Endless"; 3. "The Fire of

God"; 4. "Future Punishment not Annihilation"; 5. "As in Adam *all* Die, so in Christ shall *all* be made Alive"; 6. "The Preaching of Christ to the Spirits in Prison"; 7. "The Intermediate State." His line of thought was what is commonly called Universalism or Restitutionism; and naturally his utterances pleased a good many people, and shocked others. In the latter class was one of his clerical neighbours, whom, after some friendly correspondence, he invited to come and discuss the question with Father Corbet at the Deanery. The following letter, written after the discussion, illustrates the influence exercised by the student over the preacher:—

"If you and Fr. Corbet are human, you will have some curiosity as to my feelings after last evening's 'chat.' First, then, I had a disagreeable feeling of having been trapped. It seemed to me that it would have been better . . . if your invitation had run thus—'Come and meet a man who is my Pope on this question—infallible, or with a thoroughly crystallized conception of the views in question; come and be punched.' . . . It seems to me that those who take a different view from your own are rather Micaiahs in your eyes."

Andrew Jukes, who, whatever else he was, was a theological scholar, wrote as follows when urging Wilberforce to publish his addresses:—

“They are far, far the best addresses I have ever seen upon the subject, very far indeed beyond Farrar’s *Eternal Hope*. He is very strong as a rhetorician ; but your Instructions have been really instructions, quite as eloquent as Farrar’s, and far more thoughtful and far more scriptural. Farrar’s very rhetoric on a subject like that of future judgment grates upon my ears. His words are so strong—on this point one wants strong thoughts more than strong words.”

Even Bishop Harold Browne, whose very name was a synonym for orthodoxy, did not condemn the sermons, but regarded them with a gentle and qualified approval ; while he laid stress upon the limits which God has set to our knowledge of His invisible world.

At Broadlands, as I showed above, there was an abundance of lively oracles ; and no one was more oracular than James Williamson Farquhar, who was styled by his admirers “Le Philosophe Inconnu.” He was an ancient Scotsman, whose beginnings were wrapped in mystery : he had been a Presbyterian, then a Swedenborgian, then a Spiritualist, and had even “lectured on behalf of Atheism.” In the end, he “came to rest in a sort of tranquil Universalism, believing that there was something good in every positive opinion,” and felt himself “able to worship anywhere.” Indeed, as he was “a whole-hearted and practical determinist,” it could not have

mattered much to him where he worshipped, or whether he worshipped at all. He published a book called *The Gospel of Divine Humanity*, and anyone who reads it can easily discern the influence which his mind exercised on the later ministry of Basil Wilberforce.

It was at Broadlands that the two men met; and the first result of their meeting was the following invitation, which Wilberforce issued to some of his friends and neighbours:—

“PRIVATE.

“DEANERY, SOUTHAMPTON,

“October, 1881.

“A series of Conversations on the Philosophy of Religion will take place (D.V.) at the Deanery, on ten consecutive Monday Evenings, from 5 to 7, commencing October 31. The subject for each Monday will be introduced by a Paper, which will be read by Mr J. W. Farquhar, after which free discussion will be invited.

“The subjects and dates are as follows:—

Oct. 31	.	.	<i>God.</i>
Nov. 7	.	.	<i>Revelation.</i>
„ 14	.	.	<i>Faith.</i>
„ 21	.	.	<i>The Prenatal Life, and Birth of Christ.</i>
„ 28	.	.	<i>The Gospel.</i>
Dec. 5	.	.	<i>The Atonement.</i>
„ 12	.	.	<i>The Trinity.</i>
„ 19	.	.	<i>The Sacraments.</i>
„ 26	.	.	<i>The Divine Humanity.</i>
Jan. 2	.	.	<i>The Last Judgement.</i>

“It is particularly requested that all who take part in these gatherings will make it a subject of earnest prayer, that the Conversations may be guided by the Holy Spirit of God.”

One of those invited made the following reply :—

“Your invitation to the series of Conversations at the Deanery has puzzled me a good deal. The general subject, ‘The Philosophy of Religion,’ is of such stupendous import, and the several subjects given will require such reverent, exact, and careful treatment, that I shrink very much from embarking on their discussion unless I can feel some confidence in the man to whose leadership the discussion is to be entrusted. For a ‘free discussion’ of such subjects, I consider a body composed of such average members as myself wholly unqualified. Trained theologians alone are competent to discuss them, or perhaps I should say that it is only safe to discuss them under the eye and with the guidance of trained theologians. The philosophy of any science surely would be torn to rags and tatters if discussed by others than experts. I tremble to think of the amount of nonsense, or worse, that may be talked unless we have some protection against ‘philosophy falsely so called,’ and amongst ourselves, I really see no one able

to do this. Before deciding whether to accept or decline your invitation I should very much like to know—1. Who Mr J. W. Farquhar is? Is he a Churchman? a Clergyman? Is your invitation confined to the Clergy? If not, whom have you included? and whom may we expect to meet? May I further ask, What is the force of the word *Private* at the head of your invitation?"

The force of the word "Private" was that Farquhar's papers were not to be reported; but a rumour of strange teachings went abroad, and the clergyman who had made these very pertinent enquiries seems to have thought that the matter might be usefully considered by the Ruridecanal Chapter. Basil Wilberforce thought otherwise, and his friend thus replied, on the 18th of February 1882:—

"I have quite made up my mind *not* to suggest the subject I mentioned to you for Chapter discussion. Whatever I might say, there are those who might think that we were sitting in judgment upon you, and I quite agree with you in thinking that this is beyond our powers. And from what you say it is clear that you would have something of the same sort of feeling, so I shall try to evolve some other less dangerous subject for discussion.

"I really think you wholly misunderstand

the feeling of the Clergy of our Deanery towards yourself when you talk of their hating you. It is not the case — far from it. I quite grant that you and your doings are freely discussed, and some blame you, and are fierce in their condemnation of your action now and then, but no one who knows you ever expresses one word of ‘hatred’ towards you, even when you may vex them most. Mr —— is a new man, and does *not* know you, and moreover is, *entre nous*, an ass, and brayeth loudly.

“But you must not mistake the feeling of the Clergy generally towards yourself, and it is a great mistake to talk about their ‘hating’ you. If you think they do, you will soon make them do so. Perhaps few are more exercised by your doings and sayings at times than this ‘old bigot,’ but I am sure that you will believe me when I say that you have a *very* warm place in my heart, and that my affection for you is very real and true. I am not fond of declarations of this kind, but your letter calls it out. Please believe it.”

What this wise and faithful friend said of his own feelings was true of many others, both at the time at which he wrote and in succeeding years. Much that Wilberforce said and did (as, for example, when he invited an unbaptized Hindoo to preach in his church) was perplexing, and even distressing, to such of his friends

as valued accurate theology and consistent churchmanship. But that perplexity — even that distress—never impaired their sense of his truly lovable nature, or blinded them to his genuine enthusiasm for truth, and righteousness, and mercy.

CHAPTER V

POLITICS

To describe the political faith and action of Basil Wilberforce is no easy task. He had been trained in an hereditary reverence for Gladstone, in detestation of the Whigs, and in friendly relations with the Tories. He believed himself to be a Liberal, and professed to feel the existence of a Conservative Government as a burden and a grief; but it was impossible to predict the line which he would take in any political emergency.

It is, I think, quite clear that it was Teetotalism which definitely attached him to the Liberal party. We have seen in a previous chapter that he was suddenly and whole-heartedly converted to the faith of Total Abstinence; and perhaps it was the most abiding enthusiasm of his life. His conversion took place in the days of the "Permissive Bill," and he became a strenuous supporter of that impracticable policy. Broadly, the Liberal party was the party of Temperance, though there were a great many Liberals who would have nothing to do with

Total Prohibition ; and men who were in earnest about legislative remedies for drunkenness almost inevitably tended to the Liberal side. Was it right for the Rector of St Mary's to identify himself with a party with which, on some points of its programme, *e.g.* Disestablishment, he did not agree ? In this perplexity, he sought counsel from one who, in spite of manifold differences, had been his father's friend. Here is the reply :—

“Nov. 17, '77.

“MY DEAR MR WILBERFORCE,—Your letter is a curious one to be addressed to me. I wish I could answer it in any satisfactory way.

“I do not wish to see Ministers of the Established Church or of the Nonconformist Churches entering largely into the strife of politics, but I think they are called on to take their part in public affairs with that moderation and good example which belong to their special Christian character and office. Dissenting Congregations are almost all Liberal, and their Ministers are generally so, but only a few Ministers step out into the political field, and then chiefly when questions affecting Nonconformists are before the public. On the other hand, Church Congregations are much more Tory than Liberal, and yet there must be some Liberals, and some fairly influential ones, in most of the Congregations.

“I think a Clergyman should think first of

his duty as a Clergyman, and to his Congregation, or flock, or parish—and this will probably in many cases prevent him from being *prominent* in political action to which his flock are opposed—but I should hope it is possible for him in a manner at once mild and yet firm to give his vote for a Liberal Candidate, and to *allow his sympathy for him and his views to be known*, without exciting the anger and opposition of those to whom he ministers.

“Some years ago it was said that my neighbour, Mr Molesworth, excited the anger of his Tory Congregation—or the Tories in his Congregation—by referring in a sermon to the duty of electors to vote conscientiously, and to the expression of some approval of the ballot. It is said that he was on the point of resigning his living owing to the opposition to him excited by what he had said. But a better feeling prevailed, and the Congregation would not part with him, and I have not heard that his influence is impaired.

“One of the arguments in favour of your Church is that its Ministers are more independent of their Congregations than is the case among Dissenters—surely, then, the independence may be shown in the freedom with which your Ministers may act in the field of public duty outside the duties of the services and the pulpit.

“But there is always one great difficulty in your way. You are Ministers of a State

Church, and constantly questions are turning up which touch the very principle on which you depend or exist. So you can hardly separate real public interests from your personal position and the special privileges of your Church. In the question of the Burials Bill¹ this is eminently the case. If the Grave Yard were not surrounding the Church, and if the Clergyman were not freeholder in regard to it, and if he did not think his personal rights and supremacy were assailed, he could not possibly work himself into a great ferment on this Bill.

“It seems to me a fatal difficulty that from your position you are expected to be Tory, and that from their position within the borders of a State Church your Congregations must almost of necessity be Tories. It seems a condemnation of the theory and policy of a State Church. As to your own position, you are active and most useful on the Temperance Question—you need not make political speeches, but you need not conceal your views on public questions.

“The good Spirit which guides you, I doubt not, in other things will guide you in respect of the political branch of your duty, whenever you have to deal with it. Forgive this poor reply, and believe me, with high regard, very sincerely yours,

“JOHN BRIGHT.”

¹ The Conservative Government had just brought in a “Burials Act Consolidation Bill.”

An occasion soon arose which forced the Rector of St Mary's to define his position. Southampton was a constituency returning two members, and since the Reform Act of 1832, it had constantly oscillated between the Liberals and the Conservatives. At the General Election of 1874, a Liberal had been returned at the head of the poll, with a Conservative, Russell Gurney, Q.C., Recorder of London, in the second place. In June 1878 Gurney died, and a contest for the vacant seat arose between Alfred Giles, a Conservative and Chairman of the Union Steamship Company, and a Liberal lawyer, H. M. Bompas. Giles was opposed to the Permissive Bill; Bompas was more or less friendly to it; and, though he was a Dissenter and an advocate of Disestablishment, Wilberforce supported him. Of course this action created an enormous hubbub; and a Tory nobleman, living near Southampton, uttered the thoughts of many hearts in the following letter:—

“I could never have believed it possible that you would support a Radical Dissenter for Southampton, still less that you would nominate him, and yet, alas! it is true. I was even more grieved to hear what you had said—‘That you would rather vote for ten Radical Dissenters who would support the Permissive Bill, than one Churchman and Conservative who would not do so.’ . . .

“You are now engaged in building up your church, and yet you are helping one to a place of power to destroy it. How could you, with such opinions, ever ask Churchmen to help you in this work? It would be as well for us to cast our money into the sea, and I would rather do so than help to lay a stone of a fabric for one who builds it up with one hand and with the other helps the enemy to pull it down. . . . Many very dear memories come up to my mind; recollections which make my heart ache, while I say to myself, Can it be that this has come over our beloved Bishop’s son?”

But, in spite of Wilberforce’s support, Bompas was beaten, as he himself said, “mainly through the opposition of the Licensed Victuallers,” and was politely told by the Liberal Association that he need not stand again. They thought, and probably with perfect truth, that “the Temperance party lost the election.”

This untowardly ended Wilberforce’s first intervention in active politics; but he was now definitely committed to the Liberal side, and he remained faithful to it, in his own eclectic and incalculable way, to the end of his life. When Gladstone was converted to Home Rule, Wilberforce espoused the new policy: after the General Election of 1886, he wished to see it abandoned or modified. In 1889 he was again an enthusiastic Gladstonian, and in June of that year he

entertained the Liberal leader and a great concourse of his supporters in the grounds of the Deanery at Southampton.¹

When Gladstone retired, Wilberforce became an adherent of Lord Rosebery ; supported the South African War ; and has been heard to say that he “would be very glad to see a tax on bread.” In brief, his political action was incalculable ; and yet there was substantial justice in what the Prime Minister said when offering him the Deanery of Peterborough in 1908—“Your appointment would be properly regarded not only as a tribute to your great

¹ He was probably influenced by his uncle, Cardinal Manning, who in 1886 had written with his habitual wisdom : “Now for Ireland. My mind is this—

“1. The integrity of the Empire and of the Imperial Parliament must be maintained inviolate and inviolable.

“2. This granted, I would give to Ireland a true and effective power of managing its own *local* and *internal* interests.

“I have been disappointed in Gladstone’s Bill—

“1. It mutilated the Imperial Parliament.

“2. It made a legislature for Ireland, which so far as I can see or hear could not work.

“3. It called it a ‘Parliament,’ which will generate all kinds of false ideas, aspirations, pretensions, and conflicts.

“As to our people in Southampton, I take it that every Irish Vote will go for Gladstone—and that will be *in confuso* for Home Rule in some wiser and better form.”

services to the Church and to the House of Commons, but also as some slight recognition of the strenuous work which you have done for Liberal causes, and in particular for Temperance reform.”

CHAPTER VI

ILLNESS

WE saw in the opening chapter that Basil Wilberforce had been physically delicate in boyhood and early manhood. Strength seemed to come with years, and his nervous energy braced him for efforts, especially in the way of public speaking, from which robust men might have shrunk. He was troubled by a poor digestion, which necessitated a rigid discipline in diet, and instantly avenged the slightest departure from it. It was remarked by one who knew him well, that no one ever did so much work on so little food. He suffered acutely from a malady called *vertigo oculorum*, which produced the effect of temporary blindness, and, while it lasted, made reading from print or even manuscript impossible.

The climate of Southampton never suited him, and he was obliged to escape from it whenever possible for a gallop in the New Forest (which he thoroughly enjoyed), or for a trip on the Continent (which he enjoyed less). After fourteen years of hard and anxious labour

in St Mary's parish and on Teetotal platforms everywhere, the minor ailments from which he always suffered came to a head in dangerous illness. In the summer of 1885, he was laid low by an intestinal abscess, and he underwent a critical operation at a house in Great Stanhope Street, kindly placed at his disposal by his devoted friends, Lord and Lady Mount Temple. The operation was severe, and the recovery tedious; but the whole experience revealed a fund of vigour in his constitution which might scarcely have been suspected in so fragile a frame.

When the danger had happily passed over, the doctor who always attended him wrote as follows:—

“I think you have battled through a very painful and suffering illness with great patience and courage, and I felt it a great privilege in having the opportunity of doing all I had the power of doing to assuage your very severe pains. I was not able to see Sir Joseph Lister until this morning, when his reply to your question was that he considered you ought to desist from preaching or addressing meetings until there was more evidence of the abscess having healed. In this I quite agree. Do all in your power to gain strength, and that will help the healing process.”

Sir Andrew Clark, who had attended as consulting physician, wrote as follows:—

“I am so touched by your letter and by the example you have given me, and indeed many others, of your resignation, fortitude, devoutness, fervour, and humility, that I cannot choose but write and tell you so.

“In how many ways your illness may be sanctified and blessed, I do not pretend even to imagine; but, as far as I am concerned, in one way at least, in the way of connecting my daily work with something higher and also deeper than merely professional and personal ends, your illness will be a lasting influence and presence for good.”

As soon as Wilberforce was well enough to travel, he went to a delightful villa, lent to him by Lord and Lady Mount Temple, on Babbacombe Cliff, near Torquay, and there he wrote the following letter of thanksgiving:—

“BABBACOMBE CLIFF,
“*July 12, 1885.*

“MY DEAR PARISHIONERS, CONGREGATION, AND FRIENDS,—You will, I am convinced, understand the intense desire I have long felt to hold some more direct and personal communion with you all, and to express to you my heartfelt appreciation of the loving solicitude which has possessed you on my behalf. The very trying nature of my illness, with its frequent and unexpected relapses, the great uncertainty of its issue, and my extreme

subsequent weakness, have combined to keep me hitherto silent. If it is the Will of God to permit me once more to worship in your midst, I shall, as is meet, publicly return thanks in our own Church for my restoration ; but I feel that the time has come when I can ask you to unite with me in offering unto the Father of all mercies my most humble and hearty thanks for all His goodness and loving-kindness, and especially for His late mercies vouchsafed unto me.

“I dare not assume that I am as yet restored to health ; there is still much that is amiss with “this body of my humiliation” ; it is not improbable that I may never be restored to the same physical activity as before, and it is impressed upon me that, if I am again to work even moderately in the Lord’s Vineyard, I must be content to live more or less the life of an invalid for some time to come ; but my heart is full of thankfulness for the measure of restoration granted to me, and this thankfulness I ask you to help me express before the Throne of Grace on Sunday, July 12, on which day I hope to be able to attend the mid-day celebration of Holy Communion in Babbacombe Church.

“I will not risk distressing any by even a superficial description of the very serious illness through which the Great Physician has led me. It has pleased God to seal my sonship and assure me of my reception with the scourge

of intense and prolonged suffering, during which He never permitted me for one moment to doubt His love, or to forget the powerful words of comfort in the Epistle to the Hebrews : ‘My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him ; for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.’ The furnace of His Fatherly chastening was indeed heated seven-fold, but there was ever with me the presence of the Mystic Fourth (Daniel iii.), whose form is that of the Son of God. More than once the veil of this earthly tabernacle, which hides from us eternal things, was worn very thin, and I have found myself face to face with death. At those supreme moments, the intense reality of the magnificent Gospel of our redemption took full possession of my soul ; upon the very threshold of the judgement-seat of the All-Pure Almighty One (for it is appointed unto all men once to die, and after that the judgement), I was filled with the conviction that I had nothing but the entire sufficiency of Christ to lean upon ; looking at self, I could say nought but ‘I have left undone those things which I ought to have done, and I have done those things which I ought not to have done, and there is no health in me’ ; looking at Jesus, the answer came full and clear : ‘The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all’ ; ‘There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ

Jesus.’ Only suffer me to emphasize this fact, if I had not long since, in the time of my health, solemnly accepted God’s way of Salvation, and taken Christ to be my Saviour, I *could not have done it then*. I have now experienced for myself that what is called a death-bed repentance is a delusion and a snare; with a body weakened by disease, with nerves of sensation dulled, with powers of thinking almost suspended, it is not possible intelligently to enter into that definite transaction whereby the sins of a lifetime are cast on the Son of God, and the peace of forgiveness flows into the soul; and it is everything at those moments of approaching dissolution, though conscious of entire unworthiness and much imperfection, to possess the deep inward peace which flows from acceptance with God, and which justifies the utterance: ‘Thou hast taught me to say, It is well, it is well with my soul.’

“When I think of the incessant fervent intercessions of the Lord’s children which have been ascending on my behalf, I feel that I have been *prayed back* from the gates of the grave; a new responsibility rests now upon those who have thus interceded; it is that they shall now pray for me ‘that my heart may be unfeignedly thankful, and that I may show forth His praise, not only with my lips, but in my life.’ Let this be the prayer of my friends this day, when it is announced amongst you that your Rector ‘desires to offer up his praises and

thanksgiving for God's late mercies vouchsafed unto him.'

"The grace of God abide with you all.—I am, yours in Christ Jesus,

"BASIL WILBERFORCE."

So all was going happily, when some fanatics of Teetotalism involved Wilberforce and his friends in a vexatious controversy. In a letter which was publicly read at a "Blue Ribbon" Meeting at Southampton, Wilberforce had said: "It is a great satisfaction to me, and I am sure it will be also to my friends in this movement, that it has pleased God to carry me through my recent very severe illness without the assistance of strong drink. In my determination with regard to this, I was very good-naturedly assisted by the eminent medical men who were in attendance upon me." Hereupon a gossiping lady told a friend that the statement was untrue, for brandy had been administered to Wilberforce by his doctors. The friend immediately published the lady's statement; and such papers as the *Christian World* and the *Blue Ribbon Chronicle* opened their columns to an animated discussion of the question — Brandy or No Brandy? Finally, Wilberforce was asked to decide the question, and, as he had been unconscious during part of his illness, he referred it to Sir Andrew Clark, who replied as follows:—

“Sir Prescott Hewett and Mr Butt on one occasion, in the discharge of their responsibilities, deemed it their duty to prescribe a small portion of alcohol for you, and you unwittingly took it.

“When I met my colleagues and became acquainted with the circumstances in which the alcohol was prescribed, I concurred in the propriety of what they had done. They had doubts as to your safety; and in the state of their knowledge and belief they had no justifiable solution of their doubts but in the action which they took. This action may have been necessary or unnecessary; but, trying it by any acknowledged criterion of morality, it was for my colleagues, in the circumstances, right.

“I am much concerned to think that your convalescence should be burdened and perhaps hindered by this unfortunate and vexatious circumstance; but, as the quantity of alcohol administered was minute, as you were not kept alive by it, I think that you ought to accept in silence whatever may be said.”

After so severe a trial of strength as is involved in a grave operation and a slow recovery, it was judged expedient that Wilberforce should seek complete change of scene and interests; so, in 1887, he paid a visit to the United States and Canada, where he made prodigal use of his restored energy in preaching

and speaking for Total Abstinence, and enlisting recruits for his great campaign. Three years later, he paid a similar visit to India; and on this journey he combined his attacks on drink with an almost equally vigorous attack on the opium-traffic.¹ After a "Temperance Meeting" at Calcutta, attended by more than 2000 people, the Rev. Alfred Clifford² reported that the hall had never, on any occasion, been so full. "Two hundred and thirty-four persons signed the pledge in the room, and members took away cards who could not get to the table to sign at the time. No doubt many of those who signed, however, were already abstainers."

It is possible that these great exertions were too much for a sensitive frame; and in particular it would seem that the habit of incessant speaking in crowded halls, and then going out into the night air, was injurious to his breathing organs. He became subject to attacks of bronchial catarrh, and at the beginning of 1903 it was discovered that he was suffering from an uncomfortable condition of the lungs, called emphysema. He was medically restrained from preaching the Jubilee Sermon of the "United Kingdom Alliance" in October 1903. This difficulty of respiration was in its nature incurable, and liable to serious aggravation from over-exertion or exposure. It remained with

¹ On both these journeys he was accompanied by his wife and daughter; and on the second by Lord Radstock.

² Afterwards Bishop of Lucknow.

him as a peril and a hindrance to the end of his days, and was indeed the immediate cause of his final release from the burden of the flesh.

One or two letters addressed at different times to his brother Ernest, to Mrs Ernest Wilberforce, and to Mrs Reginald Wilberforce, may be here inserted :—

“ Feb. 6, 1903.

“ Sir James Sawyer’s consultation lasted an hour and a half, and, short of skinning me, he examined every inch of me. He endorses Williams’s diagnosis—there is emphysema all round, also chronic disorganization of the bronchia. He does *not* wish me to go away. I said not a word about it—he initiated the question—he wishes to treat me somewhat elaborately for a month, and I am to see him again this day month ; he has knocked off most of my work, prescribed various medicines, rubbings, etc., also some breathing exercises which a Sandow man is to superintend ; he does not pretend he can cure or restore the cells that are broken up, but feels confident that he can so improve the general condition that the mischief shall not increase. It is all *much* better than I had dared to anticipate, and I am profoundly thankful to our Heavenly Father. Sawyer is a man who inspires one with confidence—he was very direct and positive, and indeed peremptory. I told him I had come prepared to obey him *absolutely*.”

“ July 1, 1903.

“ I have been so *very* seedy lately, *but don't say anything about it to the wife* as it upsets her. I have had constantly what they call in the old books *vertigo oculorum*, and for half an hour at a time am quite blind. Thank God it has never yet come when taking Prayers at the House or when preaching a written sermon. Sir James Sawyer says it is from want of nourishment to the brain, and I am taking all sorts of things and hope to be better; but I have lost a stone in weight, and my bones are sticking out! What ‘vile bodies’ we have! —St Paul was quite right. However, I am now off to make a speech in the East End, and am scraping through my work.”

“ Sept. 6, 1909.

“ I was in bed all yesterday—the fact is, that that emphysema which has been dormant for two years has been active again. I welcome it open-armed, but our Good God is holding our lives in His hand, and we ought not to have any wishes in that direction.”

“ March 9, 1912.

“ I quite hoped—humbly and not the least morbidly—that I should have gone to *Them* this time, but they are patching me up, and I just say, ‘Let His Will be done.’ My symptoms are all much better, but I don't *feel* better, and breathing bothers me.”

“Feb. 12, 1914.

“I am *very* slowly picking up a little strength, and do not look ahead. The loss of my faithful Ward ¹ is an almost bewildering blow. I felt so sure she would close my eyes—but all is well. God is Love. Our dear ones are near us, and happy.”

¹ Julia Ward had been Mrs Wilberforce's devoted maid, and remained with the Archdeacon after his great bereavement.

CHAPTER VII

WESTMINSTER

It had long been a matter of surprise to Basil Wilberforce's friends that he was not elevated to some official station higher than that of a Rector and an Honorary Canon. In 1882, his brother Ernest, only a year older than himself, had been appointed by Gladstone to the newly-created See of Newcastle; and when, in 1892, Gladstone became Prime Minister for the fourth time, there was a general feeling that Basil's chance had come. 1892 and 1893 passed, and the great man gave no sign. Early in 1894, it became known that he was likely to retire. February found Basil busy in the usual round of parochial work at St Mary's—sermons and classes, meetings and committees. On the 16th of February his diary records, in emphatic capitals, "Letter from G. O. M. OFFER OF WESTMINSTER CANONRY."

The letter ran as follows :—

"Feb. 15, '94.

"DEAR CANON WILBERFORCE, — I have learned your desire to leave your present benefice,

and I have been glad to find an opportunity for offering you a removal which would give you a well-deserved distinction and a larger promise of active service in and to the Church.

“Canon Furse takes the Canonry of Westminster, vacant by the death of Canon Rowsell, and vacates his own Canonry with the Parish of St John’s. It is the joint appointment which I have received permission to offer you.

“There is one word collateral (and only collateral) to this offer, which I am sure you will permit me to say. You have been distinguished —— doctrine. I rather believe on the grounds that this pulpit ——

“Believe me, with every good wish, most faithfully yours,

“W. E. GLADSTONE.”

The blanks mark passages where the letter has been mutilated; but the nature of the “collateral” word may be easily inferred from the terms of Wilberforce’s reply. Gladstone had no sympathy with the gospel of Teetotalism, and evidently suggested that crotchets of this kind could not be suitably urged from the pulpit of Westminster Abbey.

“Feb. 19, ’94.

“MY DEAR MR GLADSTONE,—I had the honour to acknowledge formally, by return of post, through Mr Lyttelton,¹ your most kind

¹ The Hon. Spencer Lyttelton, Mrs Gladstone’s nephew, was then acting as the Prime Minister’s Private Secretary.

letter conveying to me the offer of the joint appointment to a Westminster Canonry and the Parish of St John's.

“The responsibilities attached to St John's caused me at first some hesitation, as I have laboured for twenty-three years in a populous town parish, and have twice broken down in health ; but the privilege and distinction of so close a connection with the Abbey cannot but be more than sufficient to outweigh all other considerations. And I now write to accept, with sincere and heart-felt gratitude, the appointment you have done the great honour and peculiar kindness to offer me.

“May I be permitted to add that I entirely appreciate and thank you for your valuable advice as to the discretion essential in the use of the Abbey pulpit? I shall ever retain your caution in my heart, and shall earnestly seek Divine strength and guidance that I may do my duty in the new and important sphere in the Church of God to which you have appointed me.

“I have the honour to remain, with much loyalty and respect, most faithfully yours,

“BASIL WILBERFORCE.”

This was the last ecclesiastical appointment that Gladstone ever made (for he ceased to be Prime Minister on the 3rd of March), and in some respects it was one of his happiest. It gave the Abbey a preacher of fascinating

eloquence ; it reinforced good causes which in London lacked assistance ; and it helped to retain within the Communion of the Church many who, but for Wilberforce's influence, would have "gone astray in the wilderness out of the way, and found no city to dwell in."

On Sunday, the 17th of June 1894, Wilberforce preached his last sermon in St Mary's ; on the 19th he celebrated a Farewell Eucharist ; and before the week was over he had departed in a shower of testimonials and addresses which expressed a genuine affection and regret.

The house which now became his home—No. 20 Dean's Yard, Westminster Abbey—is one of the most interesting in London ; and, under his skilful direction, it soon became one of the most beautiful. Pursuing some discoveries which had been made ten years before, he disclosed some black-and-white frescoes dating from the middle of the fourteenth century ; and, below the level of Dean's Yard, he found a stone-walled chamber with a groined and vaulted roof, which he converted into a dining-room. "To Canon Wilberforce are due the thanks of all who are interested in archæology and historical art." Both he and Mrs Wilberforce excelled, as they delighted, in hospitality ; and the rooms thus renovated and transformed became the scene of a brilliant and varied hospitality, to which nothing else in London exactly corresponded.

On Sunday, the 1st of July, Wilberforce

officiated for the first time at the Church of St John the Evangelist, Westminster¹; on Saturday, the 7th, he was installed in the Abbey, and on the 1st of August he began his first term of "Residence."

The beginning of his ministry at St John's was marked by one untoward incident. In his predecessor's days, a band of Clewer Sisters had worked in the parish; but they discovered that he did not use the Athanasian Creed, that he taught Universalism, and that "the whole tone of his mind towards Church authority and Catholic tradition was quite different from that which they had lived in for years past." So, after consultation with the Warden and the Mother Superior of the Community, they retired from St John's and transferred their services to an adjacent parish. Wilberforce did not try to replace them, but organized his parish on the lines which he had followed at Southampton. He had energetic Curates, devoted District-Visitors, and an elaborate apparatus of Guilds, Institutes, Clubs, and Parochial Committees. He generally celebrated and preached at St John's on Sunday morning, and, after Evensong, conducted a Special Service of Intercession at which the

¹ St John's Church stands in Smith Square. (See Lord Beaconsfield's *Sybil*, book iv., chapter vi.) The Rector of St John's is neither instituted nor inducted. He is Rector by virtue of his Canonry, and his installation as Canon is held to be sufficient for all purposes.

“requests” of the congregation were informally “made known unto God.” When in Residence, he celebrated in the Abbey on Sunday morning and preached there on Sunday afternoon. The general lines of his ministry will be described later on; but here it may be recorded that, though he would not have been called a Ritualist, yet his bearing and gestures at the altar were always marked by a dignified solemnity which bespoke his sense of the greatness of the Eucharistic action. One who often served him at the Celebration writes as follows :—

“He certainly was most dignified and reverent. The Ablutions were always most thoroughly performed by him. It was obvious that he had made some careful study of the art—if I may use the word—of Celebrating. He had a definite line of action, so to speak, and I have never known him vary it in the smallest particular. He used, among other things, to say the ‘approach’ to the altar, and he *never* turned his back on the Blessed Sacrament. The *Pax* he always said facing eastward, and he would then make the proper half-turn for the Blessing.”

Apart from his strictly ministerial work, he was in great request as a speaker for benevolent and charitable causes. He continued to labour for Total Abstinence, and formed a branch of his “Blue Cross Guild” in St John’s parish.

He championed tortured animals against the vivisectionists,¹ and made one of his most effective quotations in reply to some ribaldry of Sir Victor Horsley—

“The modest, sensible, and well-bred man
Will not insult me—*and no other can.*”

The persecution of the Armenians by their Turkish oppressors was just now exciting English sympathy, and Wilberforce not only pleaded their cause at public meetings, but charitably invited them to celebrate their own Liturgy in St John's Church.

To these various activities there was soon added another, of which it may be truly said that it was the most pleasurable incident of Wilberforce's later life. Dr Farrar, when Archdeacon of Westminster and Rector of St Margaret's, had also been Chaplain to the Speaker. In 1895 he was promoted to the Deanery of Canterbury, and soon afterwards he resigned the Chaplaincy. Several distinguished clergymen desired the vacant office, but at the end the choice lay between two—Basil Wilberforce and A. C. Ainger, Master of the Temple. Both were admirably qualified so far as voice and elocution were concerned, and Wilberforce bore a name which had been famous, in one House of Parliament or the other, for a hundred years.

¹ His hatred of scientific cruelty was so intense that he wished to exclude vivisectionists from the Temperance platform.

On the 15th of January 1896, his diary records, in rubricated capitals, "SPEAKER'S LETTER CAME." It ran as follows:—

"DEAR CANON WILBERFORCE,—The Dean of Canterbury has, as you probably know, resigned the Chaplaincy to the Speaker, and I have much pleasure in offering it to you. No doubt you are aware that the Chaplain is expected to abstain from taking part in Election contests, and from displaying an active and public interest in Party politics, but I hope that notwithstanding this restriction, you will find yourself able to accept my offer.

"May I add that the recollection of the friendship which once existed between my father and Bishop Wilberforce (your father), and other members of your family, adds to the pleasure which I feel in asking you to be my Chaplain.—Believe me, yours very faithfully,

"W. C. GULLY."¹

There was no hesitation about the reply.

"Jan. 15, '96.

"DEAR MR SPEAKER,—I accept with the deepest gratitude the great honour that you have graciously offered me. I am not using the language of exaggeration when I say that the position of Chaplain to the Speaker presents to me greater attractions than any other office,

¹ Afterwards Lord Selby.

even the most exalted, in the Church of England. My pleasure in accepting your offer is greatly enhanced by the kindly words in which it is conveyed, and by your reference to the close friendship which existed between our Fathers.

“I can only assure you, Sir, that it will be my first desire to serve you with the utmost loyalty in the honourable position you have conferred upon me.—I have the honour to remain, gratefully and respectfully yours,

“BASIL WILBERFORCE.”

What Wilberforce said about the attractions of this office was no exaggeration. He felt it a spiritual privilege to conduct the daily devotions of the House of Commons. He delighted in the free access to the debates in both Houses, which was by courtesy conceded to him. He enjoyed the opportunity of meeting, at the Speaker's Dinners and Levees, all the prominent politicians of the day; and, taking a wider view of this office than had prevailed with his predecessors, he placed his private ministrations at the service of sick or sorrow-stricken M.P.'s. However ill or tired he might be feeling, he would struggle through wind and weather to his duties at the House, where his graceful presence, his melodious voice, and his dignified courtesy were heard and seen to the best advantage. He became conspicuously a favourite with the members of the House, and

had as many friends on one side of it as on the other.¹

The acceptance of the Chaplaincy made an important alteration in his way of life. The "Permissive Bill" had disappeared from practical politics, but a scheme called indifferently "Local Veto" or "Local Control over the Liquor-Traffic" had been generally adopted by the Liberal party, and Wilberforce had often spoken on political platforms for Liberal candidates who were sound on the "Liquor Question." The conditions attached to the Chaplaincy made this line of action no longer possible, and henceforward he disappeared from all platforms except those of purely charitable or humanitarian causes, such as the regulation of Dangerous Trades, and the support of the Anti-Vivisection Hospital.

The year 1896 was marked by yet another distinction. In the autumn of that year Wilberforce was appointed one of the Select Preachers before the University of Oxford. His term of office began at Michaelmas 1897, and lasted for two years. He was naturally gratified by the honour which his University thus conferred on him, but the actual performance of the duty he never much enjoyed. One who heard him writes: "His sermons were thoroughly adequate from the Academical point of view, the style eloquent, and the delivery exceptionally fine.

¹ He was re-appointed by Mr Speaker Lowther (who succeeded Mr Speaker Gully in 1905), and held the office till the end of his life.

The audience was rather above the average, but not what the preacher deserved."

The summer of 1898 was made memorable by the last illness of Mr Gladstone, who died on Ascension Day, May 19. As soon as it became known that he was to be buried in Westminster Abbey, and that the coffin was meanwhile to rest in Westminster Hall, Wilberforce threw himself with pious and filial energy into the work of seeing that the preliminary rites were becomingly celebrated. With the cordial co-operation of the Earl Marshal, he arranged the lying-in-state on Christian lines, bringing the Altar-Cross from St John's to stand at the head of the bier, and greeting the arrival of the coffin with a short office of devotion. During three successive nights, the coffin was watched by a band of devoted churchmen, eager to pay this last office of Christian charity to the greatest lay-member of the English Church, and Mrs Wilberforce used her remarkable powers of organization in arranging the list of watchers and the hours of their attendance.¹

In November 1900, Wilberforce was made Archdeacon of Westminster, in succession to

¹ When Mrs Gladstone died, Basil Wilberforce rendered, *mutatis mutandis*, the same services; and, in 1906, a brass plate was, at his suggestion, placed in Westminster Hall to mark the place where Gladstone's bier had stood.

the Venerable C. W. Furse. The Archdeaconry involves no practical duties, but gives its occupant a seat in the Lower House of the Convocation of Canterbury. The new Archdeacon took little part in the business of that House, but was regular in attendance, and used to give a series of "Convocation Luncheons," which were indeed refreshments to his colleagues, parched by dry debate. One¹ of those colleagues writes as follows :—

"Among the sunny memories of years gone by, there are few brighter than the Convocation Luncheons at Dean's Yard. Round the hospitable table of the quaint dining-room all manner of delightful and interesting people were wont to gather during the mid-day interval. The brief relaxation and the bright welcome were favourable to the fascination of talk between guests who, 'for the more part,' were on terms of familiar friendship. In this social scene the host's share was to the full appreciated."²

The Coronation of King Edward VII., in 1902, brought Wilberforce a new variety of work and enjoyment. When the Abbey was closed for the necessary preparations, he

¹ The Venerable J. G. Tetley, Archdeacon of Bristol.

² In 1911, the Dean of Westminster (Bishop Ryle) offered Basil Wilberforce the Sub-Deanship in lieu of the Archdeaconry; but the offer was declined (with a full sense of the kindness implied in it), as the Archdeacon was "on the whole not disposed to change his present position and title."

arranged for a series of addresses to the working-men in their dinner-hour, to be delivered, some by himself and some by invited friends, in the South Cloister; and in all the details of the actual “sacring”—the grandest service in the English rite—he took the keenest interest.

As a member of the Chapter of Westminster, he had at his disposal a certain number of seats in the Abbey, and a Scottish lady to whom he offered one thanked him in a letter so remarkable that it deserves reproduction:—

“‘Second sight’ is a thing I have to struggle not to believe in. I have never struggled successfully! Just now among my own Argyllshire hills there is seated a seer of visions, who says the King is not to be crowned. The Dean of the Thistle believes it so much that he is not taking a lodging yet, but he *has* accepted the invitation to the Abbey.”

This letter was dated on the 3rd of June. On the 24th came the staggering announcement that the King was ill and the Coronation postponed. On the evening of that day Basil wrote thus to his brother Ernest¹:—

“I have just come from Buckingham Palace. The King is sleeping quietly . . . but all is off.

“I shall never forget the scene in the Abbey when it was announced this morning. The

¹ Bishop of Chichester.

Bishop of London came to the front of the theatre after the rehearsal had commenced, and then we all knelt in intercession for the poor King. He has suffered fearfully. London is stunned, and no one knows what to do. Indeed, there is nothing to be done.

“I suggested that Thursday should still go on—every one come with their tickets in morning dress and turn the service into a National Intercession—but it seems to be thought that this would imply that he is more ill than he really is. His habit of body is not propitious for an operation, and it is impossible not to consider him in great danger.”¹

This chapter may be not inaptly closed with some words originally suggested by a novel called *The Star Sapphire*, in which Basil Wilberforce was described under a very transparent pseudonym.

“Is social agreeableness an hereditary gift? Nowadays, when everything, good or bad, is referred to heredity, one is inclined to say that it must be; and though no training could supply the gift where Nature had withheld it, yet a judicious education can develop a social faculty which ancestry has transmitted. It is recorded of Madame de Staël that, after her

¹ The Coronation was postponed till the 9th of August. On that occasion, Basil Wilberforce carried the “Imperial Crown” in the Procession of the Regalia. At the Coronation of King George V., he carried the Queen’s crown.

first conversation with William Wilberforce, she said: 'I have always heard that Mr Wilberforce was the most religious man in England, but I now find that he is the wittiest.' As regards the Emancipator's son, Bishop Samuel Wilberforce, we may be content to rest his reputation for agreeableness on testimony as little biassed as that of Archbishop Tait and Matthew Arnold. The Archbishop wrote, after the Bishop's death, of his 'social and irresistibly fascinating side, as displayed in his dealings with society'; and in 1864 Arnold, after listening with only very moderate admiration to one of the Bishop's celebrated sermons, wrote: 'Where he was excellent was in his speeches at luncheon afterwards—gay, easy, cordial, and wonderfully happy.'

"I think that one gathers from all dispassionate observers of the Bishop that what struck them most in him was the blending of boisterous fun and animal spirits with a deep and abiding sense of the seriousness of religion. In the philanthropist-father the religious seriousness rather preponderated over the fun; in the bishop-son (by a curious inversion of parts) the fun sometimes concealed the religiousness. To those who speculate in matters of race and pedigree it is interesting to watch the two elements contending in the character of Canon Basil Wilberforce. When you see his graceful figure, and clean-shaved, ecclesiastical face, in the pulpit of his strangely old-fashioned church,

or catch the vibrating notes of his beautifully modulated voice in

The hush of our dread high-altar,
Where The Abbey makes us *We*,

you feel yourself in the presence of a born ecclesiastic, called from his cradle by an irresistible vocation to a separate and sanctified career. When you see him on the platform of some great public meeting, pouring forth argument, appeal, sarcasm, anecdote, fun, and pathos in a never-ceasing flood of vivid English, you feel that you are under the spell of a born orator. And yet again, when you see the priest of Sunday, the orator of Monday, presiding on Tuesday with easy yet finished courtesy at the hospitable table of the most beautiful dining-room in London, or welcomed with equal warmth for his racy humour and his unfailing sympathy in the homes of his innumerable friends, you feel that here is a man naturally framed for society, in whom his father and grandfather live again. Truly a combination of hereditary gifts is displayed in Canon Wilberforce; and the social agreeableness of London received a notable addition when Mr Gladstone transferred him from Southampton to Dean's Yard."

CHAPTER VIII

MINISTRY

To London in general, Basil Wilberforce was best known as a preacher. A Harrow boy once said to the present writer: "I was at the Abbey on Sunday, and heard Canon Wilberforce. Isn't he wonderful? I never heard an orator before. What a beautiful voice! Don't you think Macaulay's speeches must have sounded like that?" The comparison would not have suggested itself to most people; and I fancy that in respect of voice the preacher was much better endowed than the politician; but this rather indiscriminating admiration was exactly what Wilberforce's sermons elicited from the great congregations which flocked to hear him. He was least happy when he soared into the regions of transcendental philosophy; but, when making some high appeal to the moral sense, or urging some great cause of national duty, he was not easily surpassed. In the Abbey he always paid due regard to the traditional sobriety of the place; but in his own church he gave full scope to his imagina-

tion, which, ranging widely over the field of things not revealed, often landed him in strange conclusions. These conclusions, and the methods by which they were reached, were not always intelligible, even to careful listeners, for they were wrapt in a vague though glowing diction which made close thought impossible. The preacher seemed to believe in the virtue of long words to make difficult things easy. After all, "the mysterious power behind phenomena" only says in many syllables what "God" says in one; but the congregation of St John's drank in this eloquence with open mouths and ears, and firmly believed that it helped them to understand what would otherwise have been unintelligible. A "paraphrase" of the Apostles' Creed, carefully corrected by Wilberforce's hand, lies before me as I write, and may serve to illustrate his religious vocabulary:—

"I believe in One Universal Omnipotent Parent-Source, of whom, and to whom, and through whom are all things, and in whom all live, and move, and have their being, whose nature is Spirit, and whose name is Love, and whom no man hath seen at any time.

"And I believe in Jesus, called the Christ or the Anointed One, the Revealer of God to man and the interpreter of man to himself; the unique specialization of the moral qualities of the Infinite Mind, and the Archetypal specimen and Perfect Representative of the sonship of

Humanity; the peculiar Incarnation of that Divine Word, or Logos, or Eternal Reason of the Parent-Source which is Immanent in all men.

“He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; tested and made perfect by exposure to the divinely ordered resisting-agency, which is called moral evil; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into Hades, the unseen world. The third day after His crucifixion He showed Himself alive to His disciples; and after forty days He withdrew from visibility and returned, by what is known as the Ascension, to Universal Life and Authority; from thence He is ceaselessly coming in judgment or discernment upon the characters and attainments of His brethren of the Race, both whilst they are in the flesh, and when they stand, small and great, before God at the close of the education of this age; for all judgment or discernment hath been committed to the Humanity of the Parent-Source revealed in Jesus, who as the historic Christ is the manifestation, for purposes of recognition, of the mystic ‘Christ in us, the hope of glory.’

“And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the influence, or ceaselessly out-flowing life of the Parent-Source, and of Jesus the manifestor of the Parent-Source. The Holy Spirit is the Lord, the Life-giver, and the sustainer of the universe; the Inspirer of art, science, literature,

prophecy, aspiration, holiness, prayer. Though limitless, dateless, and universal, He is revealed as discoverable and accessible in the Holy Catholic Church. He is the invisible bond between souls that are sundered. He assures of pardon; convinces of the non-reality of death; and of the endless continuity of individual life. Amen."

Wilberforce's method of interpretation was peculiarly his own. In preparing to expound a text, he "conferred not with flesh and blood" of commentators or exegetes. I remember once hearing him preach from 1st St John iii. 16. The sermon was full of beauty and suggestiveness, but it prompted the question—"Do you really think that St John meant all that?" His answer was illuminating—"I don't know what St John meant, but I know what God meant me to find there." With this utterance may be compared some words written to his brother Reginald in 1913. "Remember how difficult it is to get at what Paul really believed. Sometimes he writes as a Pharisee, sometimes as an Essene. Sometimes he obviously does not know what he believes himself. He *was* a Gnostic, but his insight into the *gnosis* was clouded with Jewish eschatology."

The congregation of St John's was a congregation of women. The church seats some 800 people, and the proportion of females to

males was about 10 to 1. A friend writes: "In the last list of subscribers to the Rector's Fund, out of 140 names I notice 7 males, including the Duke of Westminster and Mr Burdett-Coutts, M.P." The congregation was extremely liberal in giving, but it responded only to the personal appeal. When the Rector was announced to preach, his admirers came and gave. When another preacher was announced, they stayed away.

As in church, so in private life. A lady, who had no sympathy with Wilberforce as a theologian, once said to me, "He knows how to talk to a woman"; and this knowledge was a great element of his power. His manner to women was perfect—gentle, easy, respectful, sympathetic; yet without a trace of that clerical love-making which, in whatever communion it is found, is so peculiarly abhorrent. Women felt that they were safe with him, and they poured their griefs and cares and worries and anxieties into his patient ears; secure not only of genuine sympathy but also of sensible advice. His mornings were generally occupied by these private audiences, and his afternoons by visits to members of his congregation, who lived perhaps far from Westminster and were hindered by infirmity or weather from making pilgrimages to Dean's Yard.

He had known in his own life the guiding influence of a woman's love, and his sense of what he owed to it affected his view of every-

thing that pertained to womankind. Conspicuously, it made him an eager advocate of Female Suffrage; it led him to rely on women's help in all works of moral reclamation; and it inclined him to a lenient judgment on women's faults, even when the suffragettes tried to destroy St John's Church. Less happily, it caused him to encourage the re-marriage of divorced people, and to rejoice in the legalization of marriage with a wife's sister. In these and in some other aberrations, which were painful to his friends, his sympathy with feminism was reinforced by his impatience of order and discipline. He was instinctively at war with whatever, in his view, hampered the free working of the Spirit, and his eagerness in this direction led to a remarkable development of his ministry.

We saw in an earlier chapter that Lord Radstock had at one time exercised a considerable influence over Wilberforce's theology. One of Radstock's peculiarities was that, interpreting St James by his own mind and conscience, he revived the practice of anointing sick people with oil, for their recovery from bodily illness. Wilberforce, who believed a good deal in the influence of mind and soul over body,¹ determined to copy Radstock's practice. In 1895 he submitted the point to

¹ I say "a good deal" advisedly; for, though I have known him use the services of a "Faith-healer," he seemed to think them rather ineffective.

Bishop Temple, and by so doing elicited a characteristic judgment.

“I have no doubt at all that James v. 15 is a medical direction and nothing else, and the lesson contained in it is that all medicine and its kind must be used religiously, with a trust in God’s love and with the knowledge that the issues of all such human action are in His Hands. The passage stands on the same footing as St Paul’s recommendation to Timothy to use wine because of his feeble health.

“Such ceremonies as anointing appear to me to be out of place, and tending to superstition. And the benediction of the oil, especially by a Bishop, gives the anointing a kind of sacramental character. And I do not think we have a right to ordain new sacraments.

“But the whole matter is private and not public, and I claim no jurisdiction over such private action. Do what you think good in the case.

“If we are to follow St James’s directions in the way that you proposed, I think we ought to bless not the oil only but all medicines that may be used. But this is a personal opinion of mine, and I have no desire to enforce it on what is privately done. The case would be quite different if it were proposed to do this anointing in church.”

One of Temple’s successors in the See of

London was much more encouraging, but prudently declined to commit himself; he thought that "a priest of your standing is justified in using his discretion." This Wilberforce did, and made the use of Unction, not as a preparation for death but as a help to recovery, a regular part of his ministry. He had friends in the Episcopal Order—not Diocesans—who consecrated the Oil for him, and he used it, together with the Imposition of Hands, on the lines of an office which he privately printed in 1914.¹

I said in a previous chapter that Wilberforce's peculiar gifts enabled him to retain in the Communion of the Church some errant souls who, but for him, would have wandered off into schism or "nothingarianism." To this I must add that the same gifts enabled him to bring into the Church many who had hitherto stood outside it; and baptisms of adults—Quakers and others—figure frequently in his diary of engagements.

It is impossible to give an adequate account of Wilberforce's ministry without touching that unwholesome subject which is broadly labelled "Spiritualism." In the middle of the nineteenth century, it was made a matter of reproach against Bishop Samuel Wilberforce that he dabbled in table-turning, "levitation," and other deceptions then practised by "Mr

¹ This was always done in private, either in the sick person's house or, more rarely, at 20 Dean's Yard. The office will be found in Appendix II.

Sludge the Medium," his confederates, and his dupes. The Bishop excused himself by the plea of an interest in Electro-biology, and affected to treat the whole business as an undeveloped science. Something of the same interest no doubt existed in the mind of Basil Wilberforce, and he combined it with a chronic desire to be "wise above what is written," and an insatiable curiosity about the life and condition of the Departed. In order to satisfy this curiosity, he condescended to all sorts of quackeries. He gravely discussed the lore of raps and vibrations. He communed with "Spooks" and "Swamis" and "Controls." He consulted clairvoyants and clairvoyantes of every type. He hearkened to one impostrix who reproduced the voices of the dead through an ear-trumpet, and to another who wrote backwards at their dictation. He went through all these experiences with an admirable gravity; talked like a convinced believer, and listened with apparent respect to inconceivable nonsense.

In 1904 he wrote to a kinswoman: "That spook 'Pater,' who says I am better, seems to have taken a fancy to me, but I give him no encouragement, and always refuse to go to any séance. *I don't like it a bit.*" On one occasion he told the present writer, with unaffected horror, of some disgusting immoralities which had been committed under a cloak of spiritual wifeship; on another he dismissed, with an amused contempt, the habitual fabrications of a

psychical believer whom we both knew. At one time he seemed to regard the question with an open mind, and proposed to take part in some "Test Séances." The character of these séances may be inferred from the conditions, which were stated thus: "The Medium submits to be denuded of all clothing, and to be re-attired in clothes provided by the Committee. The ladies and gentlemen who form 'the Circle' consent to the same conditions. The Medium consents to be secured by ligatures and seals, to be padlocked to her chair, and to be enclosed in a sack, which shall in turn be sewn up, padlocked, and sealed." After careful consideration of these and other circumstances, Wilberforce declined to participate in the experiment, his judgment being aided by the sagacious counsel of the late Mr J. N. Maskelyne, who wrote: "It is necessary to exercise the greatest caution when dealing with these fanatics. I speak with forty years' experience."

The final impression left by my many conversations with Wilberforce on these and cognate themes is that he was sometimes credulous about them, and sometimes sceptical. He had, with regard to everything, what is called "The open mind." He was by nature in the highest degree impressible; was strongly affected by his immediate environment; and had a curious knack of transmuting another person's experience or suggestion into a conviction of his own. I think he valued the creed of Spiritualism as

a counter-influence to Materialism; but after his great bereavement he told me emphatically that spiritualistic arts had never brought him any nearer the desired object of conscious communication with her whom he had lost.

To his brother Reginald he wrote, with reference to a sermon preached on Easter Day, 1913:—

“I gave reasons again for my *abhorrence* of the doctrine of Re-incarnation. I utterly disbelieve in it. Fancy the Prodigal Son, after his time in ‘Deva Khan,’ with his ring and his fatted calf, being sent back to the harlots and the pigs to work out his *Karma*! He deserved it!!

“The theory is *not* in the old Eastern faiths—not a trace of it in the Atharva Veda, the oldest record in the world.”

In what theology did Wilberforce finally repose? I find it difficult to answer. In his study the dust lay thick on the books of traditional divinity; but close at hand, in the corner where he always sate, there was a pile of more or less unintelligible discourses by mystagogues, chiefly American, and with these he often took counsel, though he bound himself to none of them. I am convinced that he never lost his hold on the central facts of the Christian revelation, yet beyond doubt he came to regard

them less and less in their objective aspect, and more and more as they corresponded to the work of the Spirit in the heart and conscience. Towards the end, all theology seemed to be for him comprehended in the one doctrine of the Divine Immanence, and yet he was not unaware that there was a perilous side to this view of truth, as the following words show :—

“ It is impossible not to notice in the teaching of the many helpful, illuminating schools of thought of our day—from all of which they who are firmly based on Catholic truth can gain much spiritual enlightenment—a certain tendency to belittle, to depreciate, the wholly unique position of the Lord Jesus, the objective Christ, as the One only, perfect, full-orbed specialization of the Infinite Self-consciousness of God. I know it arises from a laudable desire to break down limitations and see the Incarnation as an inclusive fact. It is well that these teachers should emphasize the inseverability of God and man. It is well for them to realize that Jesus is the supreme illustration of the Universally Immanent Divine Nature. It is well for them to reiterate that, ‘As He is, so are we in this world.’ It is well to be assured that God is in man as man’s true life and real being. It is, however, essential to remember and affirm that God is in Christ in a far more individual sense than that which is implied by His Immanence in

humanity. God was in Christ in such perfect identification, in such unlimited Self-realization, that of Him alone it can be said : ‘God has come down to us in the likeness of man.’ This is the faith of Catholic Christendom. That we may acknowledge this, we solemnly kneel on Christmas Day when we repeat the words in the Nicene Creed : ‘ And was made man.’ ”¹

¹ *Thoughts for Christmas* (1911).

Subjoined is a List of Wilberforce’s published Writings :—

The Purpose of God.	New (?) Theology. Thoughts on
The Power of Faith.	the Universality and Continuity
The Battle of the Lord.	of the Doctrine of the Imma-
Inward Vision.	nence of God.
Spiritual Consciousness.	After Death, What?
Steps in Spiritual Growth.	There is no Death.
The Secret of the Quiet Mind.	Why does not God stop the
The Power that Worketh in Us.	War?
Power with God.	Seeing God.
The Hope that is in Me.	Mystic Immanence.
Sermons preached in Westminster	The Hope of Glory.
Abbey. First Series.	Light on the Problems of Life.
Sermons preached in Westminster	Thoughts for Christmas.
Abbey. Second Series.	The Awakening.

LONDON: ELLIOT STOCK, 7 PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

CHAPTER IX

BEREAVEMENT

ABUNDANT testimony has been borne in previous pages to the warmth of Basil Wilberforce's affections. Indeed, no one could be for an hour in his society without noticing some instance of it. To the end of his life there were tears in his voice when he spoke of his father's sudden death. "Herbert," he used to say, "is a sacred name to me," referring to the brother whom he had lost when he was only fifteen. In his diary of engagements he always noted, when each year began, the birthdays of all his family, and the note for July 29 was *Dilectissima conjux nata*. His relations with his son and daughter were ideally beautiful, and in their company he seemed less a father than an elder brother.

His affections overflowed the limits of the home, and extended through all the circle of kinship. Ernest Wilberforce, Bishop of Chichester,

died on the 9th of September 1907, and a fortnight later Basil wrote thus to one of the bishop's sons :—

“MY DEAR VICTOR,—I have been thinking so much of you since that overwhelming blow fell upon you all.

“Your Father's great affection for you, which amounted almost to idolization, should be a restraining and stimulating memory in your life, and make you resolutely determined to act in life in such a way as to cause him pleasure, and to bring honour upon the name you bear. I am convinced that our dear ones in another condition of being are conscious of our lives here, and that we can either give them joy or sorrow by our conduct.

“Your dear mother will now rest very much upon you as the oldest home son, and you must feel a new responsibility with regard to her.

“God bless you, my dear boy.—I am your loving uncle,

“BASIL WILBERFORCE.”

The 28th of November was always noted in Wilberforce's diary as *Dies sacra*, for it was the anniversary of his wedding. His married life had been one long honeymoon. “Happy marriages, it may be thankfully acknowledged, are rather the rule among us than the exception; but even among happy marriages this

marriage was exceptional, so nearly did the union of thought, heart, and action both fulfil the ideal, and bring duality near to the borders of identity.”¹ Basil Wilberforce once said, with reference to his wife, “My life has been lived in her. She has been ‘the theatre of my actions.’” Husband and wife were never separated. He used to say that he had felt no need—indeed, scarcely had room in his life—for friendships. He never joined a Club. The moment that his work, whatever it might be, was finished, his first thought was to get back to the companionship which he had left at home, and the keenest enjoyment that life afforded him was a *solitude à deux* with the one person who completely understood him. Of them it might indeed be truly said, that they were “of one heart and of one soul.”

Mrs Wilberforce had always possessed unusual strength, and their joint life seemed to show a beautiful fulfilment of the prayer in Tobit: “Mercifully ordain that we may become aged together.” The year 1909 dawned on a home still untouched by sorrow. The 31st of January was marked as *Dies fausta*—“Left Boscombe 10 minutes to 11. Lovely through Forest. Lunched in car. Stopped an hour at Farnham. Actually moving, five hours, 107 miles—lovely day—roads perfect.”

In the week beginning February 14, Convocation was sitting, and the usual “Convocation

¹ W. E. Gladstone.

Luncheons" in Dean's Yard took place. Mrs Wilberforce was present as usual, but the diary records that she was "ill and in pain." The discomfort continued, with some alternations of relief, all through February and March, and on Maundy Thursday, April 8, husband and wife went down in their car to Folkestone. From this point Wilberforce must tell the tale in letters to his sister-in-law, Mrs Ernest Wilberforce :—

"April 10, 1909.

"We had a superb run down in the motor, only $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours, one hour of which was in the first ten miles of London traffic. She did not seem over-tired. We found our rooms charming—right over the sea, with a wide balcony—and weather glorious; but in the night all the old pain came back, and she has been very ill. If I dared, I should take her back to-day, but I must have a little more faith and patience.

"Last night was a very bad night. . . . That true friend Ward¹ and I mean to take the nights alternately if I do keep her here. We have neither of us anything to do, and it won't hurt us to be night-nurses.

"I wish I had more faith at *home*. I have such strong faith in praying for others, and we have had some most interesting incidents lately; but I feel so crushed when I hear her in pain that I can only dumbly endure it.

¹ Mrs Wilberforce's maid. See p. 95.

“This is a selfish letter, and anxiety makes me horribly selfish, I perceive.”

“FOLKESTONE,
“Easter Monday, 1909.

“Our attempt here has been a ghastly failure; she has been *very* ill, and the nights have been long vigils of pain and discomfort. That dear Ward and I have taken turns at night-nursing, and I am now taking her back to London, and have telegraphed for a night-nurse to come to-night.”

As soon as they returned to London, medical consultations were resumed, and on the 17th of April the diary records: “*Dr ——— came. Spoke doom.*”

“May 2, 1909.

“At 10 this morning a last consultation—no hope. The only thing to pray for is speed and lessening of pain. She told George Russell to-day that she knew she was dying; she has not yet said it to me. May God soon let me follow—His Will be done.”

On Saturday, the 15th of May, the diary says this only: “My beloved left us at 3.30. To Thee, O Lord, I commend her spirit.”

On Wednesday, the 19th: “THE FUNERAL.

Great tribute of affection to the beloved in the Abbey. Remains laid in Cloister."

On the 27th, Wilberforce left London with his daughter, but remained only a week at the seaside, and returned to his duties on the 3rd of June.

B. W. to Mrs Ernest Wilberforce.

"June 8, 1909.

"I got through Sunday, and preached in the Abbey, but the desolation does not diminish, and coming back to this house after being away was *very* bad."

"June 11, 1909.

"All days are the same to me, and every night 'water I my couch with tears.' This sort of thing at my age is incurable."

"Sept. 6, 1909.

"Two years ago to-day, my dearest, I received your dread telegram, 'Severe seizure.'¹ The beloved had not to linger long, and I do not think there was *pain* as we understand it—but the *silence*, and the agonizing hunger for a touch of the vanished hand! Our darlings are in a higher, grander sphere, and I am sure near us and watching over us. Remember my beloved said to you: 'I shall see him.' Of course she meant your beloved. You have longer to wait than I have."

¹ Bishop Ernest Wilberforce died September 9, 1907.

“Oct. 7, 1909.

“It is too dear of you to wish me to come to you, but it is pain to me to be out of this house. I would rather stay here, if possible, till the long-hoped-for day when my loving Heavenly Father will allow my shell to be carried out to be laid by her.”

On the 14th of May 1910, he wrote to his sister-in-law, Mrs Owen Hayter:—

“Thank you for kind remembrance—these anniversaries are heart-rending, but we are left to learn the lesson of *patience*, and to live as much as possible after the *Spirit*, that we may at once be with them when our call comes.

“Now for your questions—

“(1) One need not re-awaken memories of old sins, but as one gets nearer to God one hates oneself more for having been such a beast—and, personally, I can say with more and more truth, ‘the burden of them is intolerable,’ but dear God has forgotten them.

“(2) The whole idea of *Praise* is rather rudimentary—I should think God loathed to be praised. Every noble man does. But God likes to be *thanked* and *loved*, and a thankful heart is one which He is best able to bless because it is *receptive*.

- “(3) ‘We thank Thee for our creation’ is an affirmation that we know He will carry us through, and that the end will be so blessed that we shall forget all the discipline of life.
- “(4) It is no use comparing ourselves with others. We don’t know the hidden struggles and victories of others. There will be no ‘aloofness’; they will help us with all they have learned since they left us.
- “(5) Personal recognition? *Of course! Of course!* What would Heaven be without our beloved? George Macdonald said: ‘Do you think I shall be a greater fool in Paradise than I am here?’
- “(6) ‘Neither marry nor are given in marriage.’ Over there, we are not tied by a Parson and social conventional law, but blended as the supplement and complement of each other.”

To the Same.

“Jan. 19, 1912.

“No—we should not be *frightened* if we saw them, but we should be filled with *awe* and love. We shall not see them—the effort to

materialize to that extent is very difficult for them—we *shall* see them when we are dying. They will come to help us, and take all fear from us. . . .

“It is for us to live as much as possible after the Spirit, patiently keeping ourselves in the current of the Eternal Will. I know they influence us and pray for us. Your husband was one of the good ones of the earth, and can help you now by thought-power.”

To the Same.

“Feb. 16, 1912.

“I love my beloved *in that sense* more than I can individually love God—but it *is* loving God—human love is a reflection of God’s Love—‘If we love not those whom we have seen, how can we love God Whom we have not seen?’ God is the *substance*, the *creative* thought-form in *everything*. I love God in the flower, the sunshine, the birds, the dear animals.

“I do not like ‘Manuals,’ and do not deal in them, and what *is called* self-examination is detestable to me. What does God want me for?—That He may realize Himself, and manifest Himself in me and through me. Your real relation to the Originating Spirit is *His manifestation*. Why not use my morning prayer,¹ *meaning* each separate word, and turn it into

¹ See p. 135.

an introspection at evening prayer? To live one day in the spirit of that prayer is to *grow* as God wants us to grow—to make it the normal habit of your life is to become Christ-like, and be ready to go straight to our beloved when comes the ‘one clear call for me.’”

To his brother Reginald.

“Jan. 22, 1913.

“My *warm* greetings upon your natal day. May the loving Father keep you long amongst those who love you and need you, and may you every year grow in the knowledge of God. I think the Immanent Spirit will keep us here while we are learning and show that we *are* learning. I am greatly hoping that I may finish my lessons soon and go home, or rather go to the Higher School to be with those who have gone before—but His Will is perfect, and I know I want a little more of the *birch* before the holidays.”

To Mrs Reginald Wilberforce.

“Jan. 22, 1914.

“What a blessed quiet release from the body!¹ I had always hoped that I should be with him if he passed over first. . . . The relief at parting from the flesh-body is *very* great, and they are able to be constantly with us, loving us and

¹ Reginald Garton Wilberforce died January 19, 1914.

helping with magnetic thoughts. If I get about again, and am able, my first journey will be to see you, but my emphysema is very far advanced; only I have a strong heart, a possession I could willingly do without. . . . I am with you all at the grave-side at one o'clock to-day. There is much in the service I should like to alter, but we can with intense faith commit him to the Unfailing Divine Love.

"It will be a lovely, a glorious time when we all meet again. . . . Meanwhile you, dear little mother, have a lot to do *for him* in helping and loving *his* children."

To the Same.

"Feb. 12, 1914.

"I am constantly thinking of you and hoping you are bearing the anguish—which I know so well—of the loss of a beloved visible presence, with the *certainty* of reunion in God's good time."

A Morning Prayer.

"Our Father, I pray that I may live this day in constant recollection of my true relation, as an individual, to Thee, the Originating and Indwelling Spirit. May my conscious mind perceive that Thy Life, Thy Spirit, Thy Thoughts, are within me, and that Thou art seeking to realize Thyself, and to manifest Thy Love

through me. May my mind be a pure dwelling-place for Thy Spirit, and my thoughts only such as will heal and bless. May I remember that anger or unbrotherliness shown to another, under whatever provocation, thwarts Thy divine purpose, and grieves Thy Holy Spirit. May my highest aim this day be to manifest God, and make others happy, and may I rise every day into a higher consciousness of Thy Life and Thy Love."

CHAPTER X

SUNSET

THE letters cited in the last chapter show, better than any words of a biographer could show it, what bereavement meant for Basil Wilberforce ; but it would be a mistake to infer from them that his last years on earth were clouded or unhappy. When the first agony of grief had abated, he found abundant consolation. The devotion of his son and daughter gave him perpetual help and strength. The son was actively and honourably employed in military service ; and the appointment of his son-in-law, the Rev. E. H. Kennedy, to the Vicarage of Holy Trinity, Bessborough Gardens, brought his daughter into his immediate neighbourhood, just when her loving care became most valuable.¹ His zeal and vigour, both in public and in private ministrations, were rather increased than diminished, and he felt a special joy in the task of alleviating spiritual and temporal distress. In sick-rooms his tender yet fortifying presence was always welcome. In money-matters he was generous to a fault, and the number of those

¹ Mr Kennedy attended him on his death-bed.

whom his bounty relieved can never be known. If he wanted society, he had "troops of friends" whose chief object was to make him happy ; and, whenever the exigencies of work allowed, he found refreshment in the country, where that love of nature, both live and still, which was to him a master-passion displayed itself with winning simplicity.

So the years passed on, tranquilly and even brightly, and it seemed as if he was to have his full share in the blessing of the promise that "at evening time it shall be light." But the heavens were darkening for an unexpected storm, and he, like the rest of us, was appointed to have his part in the Great Tribulation which came upon the earth in the summer of 1914.

War was declared on the 4th of August. On Sunday, the 9th, Basil Wilberforce preached in Westminster Abbey to a thousand men and officers of the Queen's Westminster Volunteers. His text was 1 St Peter ii. 17, and, under the stimulus of the awful occasion, his eloquence rose to an unusual height and power.¹ On the 12th he bade farewell at Aldershot to his son, under orders for France. On the 30th he wrote as follows to Mrs Ernest Wilberforce, bracketing the names of his nephews with that of his son :—

"We had a thrilling Intercession service to-night. I read the three dear names, with a

¹ The Sermon is reprinted in Appendix III., by permission of Mr Elliot Stock, from *The Battle of the Lord*.

pause between each, and they were lifted into the Presence—

Ernest Victor	}	Wilberforce
William Sargent		
Herbert William		

We must *give* them, just asking for the highest best. My heart is heavy—10,000 of our dear fellows are killed, wounded, or missing—and no names!”

On Christmas Eve he wrote to Mrs Reginald Wilberforce :—

“Yes, we must thank Him for what he *has* given us, and patiently do our duty till He says, ‘Come up higher.’ I am getting through a greater amount of work than I have done for years, but, humanly speaking, it can’t last. I am *content* with His will. . . . I heard from Herbert¹ last night, all on the *qui vive*, expecting to be sent against the Bosches every moment. They are all cheerful and confident ; *but*—the trenches are awful.”

The “greater amount of work” was too great, and early in 1915 he was laid low by a severe attack of congestion of the lungs ; and it was not till the 23rd of April that he was

¹ Colonel (now Brigadier-General) Wilberforce commanded The Queen’s Bays, and his preservation from the dangers of battle, till his command expired in 1915, was perhaps the chief joy of Basil Wilberforce’s last days on earth.

able to return thanks in the *Times* for the sympathy shown "during his long and serious illness." During the summer he performed all his usual work at the Abbey, at St John's, and in the House of Commons. When the House rose, he spent a few weeks at Brighton; then he returned to Dean's Yard, and preached and celebrated at St John's on the last Sunday of the year.

The year 1916 opened badly, for on the 3rd of January he was again laid low by a recurrence of the illness which in the previous year had threatened his life. The symptoms were more severe, and the recovery was slower. On the 4th of February he travelled with his daughter to Brighton, and there he remained, surrounded by his family and friends, for seven weeks. He seemed to improve, but from time to time he would say, "I am not getting any better"; not gloomily or sadly, but as if simply stating a fact. On the 29th of March he returned to London, and resumed his usual work. On Friday, the 14th of April, he went to visit a patient from St John's Parish in a hospital at Wandsworth. "The first time he went, he had complained of the cold and draughts in the hospital, but insisted on going again to give the man some little present he had asked for, instead of sending it." This time he caught a chill. On Palm Sunday, April 16, he preached at St John's, noting in his diary: "Very seedy."

This was the beginning of the end. He now took to his bed; his daughter was in constant attendance, and his son was summoned from France. There were fluctuations of hope and fear; one day he appeared to be collapsing, and another he revived. On the 3rd of May he received a visit from the Bishop of London, and on the 6th of May he was able to talk quite in his usual way to his son and daughter, his son-in-law, and his daughter-in-law. "He spoke to us happily and peacefully, telling us that he knew he was dying." To his son he said: "You are the best son a man ever had."

On Sunday, May 7, I saw my friend for the last time. He lay in bed quite still, with his eyes shut, and I noticed that the attenuation of illness had brought out the fine lines of his profile with unusual distinctness. As I knelt by his bed, he said, "I am dying fast, and it is much more painful than I thought; but I have deserved it all." He spoke, as always, of the Love of God, and then gave me his blessing with his hand on my head—"God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, bless, preserve, and keep you, in body and soul and spirit, now, henceforth, and for evermore." So we parted.

There was now a remarkable though transient rally, and the pneumonia cleared off; but the overtaxed heart gave way, and then consciousness slowly ebbed. On Saturday, the 13th of May, about nine in the evening, he

passed in painless peace out of this life into the next.

“Just at the last, he opened his eyes and looked up towards the foot of his bed. The look was a *conscious* one—but not with a consciousness of anything here. There was a slight look of *enquiry*, a look of *satisfied recognition*, and then, with a slight smile, his eyes closed, and that was the end—or rather the beginning.”

On Thursday, the 18th of May, after a beautiful service in the Abbey, his remains were laid in the South Cloister, by the side of her who, whether in the body or out of the body, had been the other half of his heart and life for fifty years.

“We are like children, or men in a tennis-court, and before our conquest is half won the dim twilight comes and stops the game; nevertheless, let us keep our places, and above all hold fast by the law of life we feel within. This was the method which Christ followed, and He won the world by placing Himself in harmony with that law of gradual development which the Divine Wisdom has planned. Let us follow in His steps, and we shall attain to the ideal life; and, without waiting for our mortal passage, tread the free and spacious streets of that Jerusalem which is above.”¹

¹ J. H. Shorthouse.

APPENDIX I.

THESE beautiful appreciations are contributed by the Rev. Rowley Lascelles, for more than forty years Rector of Lavington; the Venerable J. G. Tetley, Archdeacon of Bristol; and the Hon. Mrs Alfred Felkin (Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler):—

Rev. R. Lascelles.

“The half century of friendship seems, as I look back, just a level plain of affectionate and loving intercourse, absolutely untouched by one single word of anything to make one feel uncomfortable. He is the *only one* of my friends of which I can say this with *absolute truth*. The kind, hospitable welcome which invariably awaited me, the affectionate meetings, the unfailing sympathy—all these, and many other things, justified me in looking upon him as my *dearest friend*.”

Archdeacon Tetley.

“It was a singularly attractive personality. The impression made on the very many who

knew him was probably of a varied kind, and it would be a study of great interest to collect and co-ordinate the main results. For myself, there are certain prominent features to which memory can never play false, and of these I propose briefly to speak.

“I think that no one, however divergent their tastes or opinions might be, could even on a slight acquaintance fail to mark how generous a spirit was his, and how trustful. He would give you of his best, with both hands, lavishly, and to all seeming without a trace of misgiving that such treatment could be abused. There was in the man a remarkably rare union of the strongest affection and a quite confident fulness of its expression. If words came easily to him in conversation, or flowed readily from his pen, it did not in the least follow that they were conventional, or even emotional in an impulsive sort of way. I should venture to say that the obviously *natural* note of his relations with his fellows constituted the charm of his character. The warmth of language was so translatable into corresponding action, as a wealth of witnesses can testify.

“There was a good deal of his father about him. Now and again the tone and inflection of the voice would bring back the memories of days that are no more, when the great Bishop of Oxford was the wielder of a spell which belonged to few indeed in like degree, and was wont to hush an audience into the silence

of absorbed attention, and in turn arouse it to an impetuous enthusiasm.

“Again, I would dwell on the intensity of his moral convictions. They fairly gripped him. They not only inspired the born orator to a white heat of denunciation, carrying him doubtless now and again beyond the limits of his more leisured judgment, but made him fearlessly independent of prejudice, interests, or opposition. It will be within the recollection of the world at large how this was the case with regard to intemperance, unhealthy trades, and experiments on live animals. I am not concerned with the defects of his qualities. Anyone who reads the obituary notices of public men in Church or State which appear in the Press, is aware of the monotonous facility with which writers appear to fasten on this side of life. My business is to place on record the real *Ego* of a gifted and generous man, whose friendship was freely accorded to me, and of which I am conscious to be less deserving than I might have been.

“It was probably this fearless attitude that so greatly impressed C. H. Spurgeon when he was Wilberforce’s guest at Southampton, and went a great way towards that better understanding of the English Church which, we have been recently told, was the outcome of the visits.

“One thing more. I do not know how it may have been in earlier years, but most

certainly there was nothing more notable in the later part of life than his genuine other-worldliness. I am not unmindful of the overwhelming sorrow that irreversibly wrought so vast a change. Rather, I reverently pause in silence on the threshold of such sacred grief. This said, I would add that I do not remember ever to have seen one who sat so lightly to life. I have before me letters from which I quote:—

“‘In His own time He will set me free from the body.’

“‘I suppose I shall get well. I *hoped* (twice underlined) that it was “sunset and evening star, and one clear call for me,” but I will not be impatient.’

“And now he has passed beyond the veil, ‘thinner than the subtlest lawn,’ to learn in clearer light the mysteries which are beyond our present faculties to apprehend. Many and many a life is the poorer for the withdrawal of one to whom the love of God and his fellow-creatures was so real and living a power.

“Come, my beloved ! we will haste and go
To those pale faces of our fellow-men.
Our loving hearts, burning with summer fire,
Will cast a glow upon their pallidness—
Our hands will help them, far as servants may ;
Hands are apostles still to saviour-hearts,
So we may share their blessedness with them.”

GEORGE MACDONALD.

Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler.

“In the lives of all of us there are certain days which we string upon a thread—like George Herbert’s Sundays—and put away in memory’s jewel-case as permanent possessions and treasures: and among such days I count all those on which I went to lunch or tea at 20 Dean’s Yard, and those on which Archdeacon and Mrs Wilberforce—and later, alas! the Archdeacon without Mrs Wilberforce—motored down to lunch or tea with us at our home at Eltham. I loved them both: and felt that the world was the better and the happier for their having passed through it.

“Among his many arresting characteristics, I think the one in the Archdeacon that struck me most was his intense spirituality. One felt that he was one of those rare souls that are unaffected by the laws of gravitation, and so rise superior to and are untouched by the attractions of the earth. I never met anyone who made me feel more intensely the reality of the things which are unseen. And by this I do not mean that he in any way gave the impression that he despised ordinary social interests and pleasures, or that ‘his soul was as a star and dwelt apart.’ What I mean is, that things seen and things unseen seemed to be all alike to him—that in his eyes that which is temporal and that which is eternal were on the same

spiritual plane. One never felt that he turned his back upon the world, as did so many of the saints of a bygone age: he merely put it in its proper place. To me he always appeared a perfect type of those who are *in* the world but not *of* it. One felt that he was a stranger and a sojourner here, having his deepest interests elsewhere; but, nevertheless, he was a guest whom it was a delight to entertain, and who added greatly to the joy of the feasts which he adorned during his pilgrimage. He had none of the Puritan horror of all things that are beautiful and delightful; but he seemed to raise the beauty and delight to a higher plane. His immunity from the law of gravitation, which prevented his being bound and tied to earth, in no wise prevented his visiting it, and making his visits sources of pleasure both to himself and to those around him: but he could rise at will into higher and purer spheres, and carry his companions with him. He knew none of those terribly distinct dividing-lines which hamper so many really good people and limit their influence; none of those relentless labellings of *Good* and *Bad*, *Right* and *Wrong*, *Orthodox* and *Unorthodox*, which make the religion of so many seem like an amateur photograph taken in too bright a light. Archdeacon Wilberforce had the artistic inward eye which can discern faint shades of difference, and can mingle and blend apparent opposites; but he also possessed the deep spiritual insight

which keeps the soul from being blinded to essential and fundamental differences.

“And this is why he had such an enormous influence over young people, and over all who are touched with the modern spirit which has outgrown the black-and-white amateur-photography teaching of our forefathers. He understood the longings and the dissatisfactions of the modern schools of thought, and sympathized with them: yet underneath these surface feelings he held firm to the Things that really matter; and so he was able to help and comfort those struggling souls who had outgrown the religion of their childhood, and were crying for something new to satisfy their spiritual needs. He gave them something new, and satisfied them: and then they found that what he had given them was nothing new at all, but just the old truths adapted to modern requirements.

“He was one of the most sympathetic men I ever met; and therefore he was one of the least narrow—for narrowness and sympathy are rarely combined in the same character. He had the gift of putting himself in another’s place, and looking at things from another’s point of view: therefore, even if he did not agree with that point of view, he always gave it its full value.

“But perhaps one of his greatest charms was the fact that his inside and his outside were in perfect harmony with each other—a some-

what rare combination in this world of paradoxes.

“The beauty of his spirit was expressed in the beauty of his outward appearance: he looked exactly the manner of man that he was. One is so accustomed to meet, if not exactly ‘white souls clothed in a satyr’s form,’ still white souls which are garbed in anything but becoming bodies—and, on the other hand, angel forms which clothe souls that are anything but white—that it is a joy to see anyone whose bodily presence is an outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual grace within.

“I think that all who enjoyed the privilege of knowing Archdeacon Wilberforce will feel that this world is the darker and the colder for his having left it: and that they themselves are the better and the wiser for having crossed his path before he went.”

APPENDIX II

AN ORDER FOR ANOINTING THE SICK

PEACE ✠ be to this house, and to all that dwell therein, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Then, all kneeling, the Priest shall say,

WE beseech Thee to hear us, O Lord; and that it may please Thee to visit Thy servant with Thy mercy and pity, and to comfort and heal *him*, renewing *him* in body and in spirit, that *he* may live and praise Thy Name.

R. We beseech Thee to hear us, O Lord.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Let us pray.

OUR Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that

trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

Then the Priest shall offer this CONFESSION in the name of the sick person.

FATHER ALMIGHTY, Lord of heaven and earth, Thy servant humbleth *himself* before Thee, because of all *his* sins whatsoever, which *he* hath committed against Thee ever since *he* was born, even unto this day, in thought, in word, in will, in act, or in consent. For all *his* sins and transgressions, *his* iniquities and offences, which in Thy grace Thou hast brought to *his* remembrance, *he* doth abhor *himself*, and those which, through *his* ignorance or carelessness, or the darkness of *his* heart through sin, *he* remembereth not, but which Thou, O Lord, who knowest all secrets, seest that *he* hath committed against Thee, do Thou forgive and cleanse *him* from them all, for Thy mercy's sake, O Lord.

R. Amen.

The Priest shall rise and lay both his hands on the head of the sick person, and say,

THE Almighty and most merciful Lord God grant unto thee full Absolution and Remission

of all thy sins, iniquities, and transgressions; and blot them out for ever. In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Then, kneeling,

O LORD GOD ALMIGHTY, pardon and purify us Thine unworthy servants, unto whom Thou hast committed this ministry of reconciliation; and vouchsafe unto us Thy Holy Spirit, that we may love and obey Thee in all things, to the glory of Thy Holy Name.

R. Amen.

Then the Priest alone shall rise, and repeat the APOSTLES' CREED, the sick person repeating it after him.

I BELIEVE in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth :

And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into Hades; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; The Holy Catholic Church; The communion of saints;

The forgiveness of sins ; The resurrection of the dead ; And the life everlasting. Amen.

If the sick person be unable, through weakness, to repeat this Creed, the Priest, after reciting it, shall ask of him whether he unfeignedly believes the same ; and receive his assent. The Priest shall kneel and proceed :

O SAVIOUR of the world, who by Thy cross and precious blood hast redeemed us ; Save us, and help us, we humbly beseech Thee, O Lord.

Let us pray.

O LORD GOD, who in Thy holy word has taught us, that if any be sick he should send for the elders of the Church, who shall pray over him, anointing him with oil in Thy most holy Name ; and that the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and Thou wilt raise him up ; and that if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him : Look, O Lord, on this Thy servant, who calleth upon Thee, and bring up *his* life again from the gates of the grave. Grant that, being anointed [according to *his* desire] by the hands of us, Thine unworthy servants, *he* may be saved from *his* present sickness, and cleansed from all infirmity of body and impurity of spirit ; that so *he* may be preserved to Thy Church, sanctified and strengthened to do all Thy will, during the time which Thou shalt prolong to

him on the earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

Consecration of the Oil.

O THOU, who art from everlasting and to everlasting, God most Holy, who didst send forth Thine Only-begotten Son to heal all manner of sicknesses and all manner of diseases, both of soul and body; send forth Thy Holy Spirit, we beseech Thee, and bless ✠ this oil to the mystical healing, through Thy divine power, of the body and of the soul of this Thy servant: that *he*, being anointed therewith in pursuance of Thine ordinance, may be saved from *his* present sickness and may receive remission of all *his* sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified through faith. Hear us in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ; to whom, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, be glory for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

Then the Priest shall anoint the sick person with the oil on the head or forehead, and, if the sick person request it, also on any part affected, and the Priest in charge shall say,

IN the Name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we anoint thee with this blessed oil; beseeching the mercy of our Lord

God, that all pain, infirmity, and sickness may be expelled from thy body, and that thy soul may be delivered from all corruption and power of sin.

Then the Priest shall lay his hands on the head of the sick person, and shall continue :

GOD ALMIGHTY, who by His Son Jesus Christ healeth all our sicknesses and forgiveth all our sins ; Have mercy upon thee, grant unto thee forgiveness of all thy sins, heal thee and deliver thee from all infirmity of body and mind, and quicken thee through the grace of His Christ.

R. Amen.

Then the other Priests present shall also lay their hands on the head of the sick person, and the senior Priest shall say,

ALMIGHTY GOD, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, grant unto thee, through His holy anointing, and in answer to our prayers, to be purified and strengthened by the Holy Ghost in soul and spirit, and to be restored to perfect soundness in thy body.

R. Amen.

Then all shall kneel.

Let us pray.

O LORD our GOD, who art the Physician of our souls and of our bodies ; who chastenest and

again Thou healest ; We beseech Thee mercifully to look upon Thy servant, who cometh unto Thee in Thy holy ordinance, and seeketh in faith the blessing of renewed life at Thy hands. O Thou who didst hearken unto Hezekiah in the affliction of his soul, in the hour of approaching death ; who didst send Thy Son Jesus Christ to bear our sicknesses and carry our sorrows, have mercy upon this Thy servant, and give unto *him* to experience Thy healing power and virtue, both in *his* body and in *his* soul. Into Thy hands we commit *him* ; unto Thy gracious mercy and protection we commend the keeping of *his* soul and body, as unto a faithful Creator and most merciful Saviour. And unto Thee we ascribe all glory, unto the Father, unto the Son, and unto the Holy Ghost, world without end.

R. Amen.

O MOST merciful God, who, according to the multitude of Thy mercies dost put away the sins of them that truly repent, look upon this Thy servant, who most earnestly desireth pardon and forgiveness. Renew in *him*, most loving Father, whatsoever hath been decayed by *his* carnal will and frailty ; preserve and continue this sick member in the unity of Thy holy Church, and strengthen *him* continually with Thy divine and quickening Spirit, that *he* may abide Thy faithful servant unto everlasting life : through Jesus Christ our

Lord ; Who liveth and reigneth with Thee,
O Father, in the unity of the Holy Ghost,
One God, world without end.

R. Amen.

*The Priest shall rise and pronounce over the
person who has received the anointing, this
Blessing :*

GOD the Father bless thee, ✠ God the Son
heal thee, God the Holy Ghost sanctify thee,
restore thy body, save thy soul, shine into
thy heart.

The God of peace Himself sanctify thee
wholly, and preserve thy whole spirit and soul
and body blameless, unto the coming of our
Lord Jesus Christ.

R. Amen.

*All the holy oil that shall remain after the
anointing shall be forthwith consumed by
fire.*

APPENDIX III

1 *St Peter*, ii. 17.

Honour all men.

Love the Brotherhood.

Fear God.

Honour the king.

I SUGGEST these four words of command as a motto to your distinguished Regiment. Their tone of military authority, their soldierly brevity, make them obviously appropriate to present circumstances. The four propositions included are :

The dignity of humanity.

The value of esprit-de-corps.

The profound necessity for God

The divine authority for loyalty.

Great is the change that has “passed o’er the spirit of our dream” since I last addressed your fine corps of citizen soldiery organized for home defence.

You are no longer a volunteer corps. I rejoice, however, that you have retained your distinctive name of “the Queen’s Westminsters.” You are now part of the Territorial Army bearing the official title of “the 16th County

of London Battalion, the London Regiment, Queen's Westminster Rifles."

When I last proposed to you a motto, the storm of the Boer War had burst over the nation, and heroically did your corps distinguish itself. More than nine hundred of you volunteered, at considerable sacrifice of employment and family convenience, for garrison duty at home. Nine officers and two hundred men volunteered for active service and nobly sustained the honour of the corps. At Jacobsdal you covered the advance and earned the warm praise of the General commanding the Brigade. Three of your officers and one sergeant were recommended for permanent commissions for gallant conduct in the field, and you may be justly proud of your share of the praise of Lord Roberts in his despatch from the Modder River on February 11, 1900, in which he says: "I have no finer and keener material under my command than that which has been enrolled in the ranks of the volunteers from the City of London."

That sanguinary struggle, in which you bore so heroic a part, provided a lesson both to England and to Europe; the nation realized herself, and the highest qualities of our national character were elicited. No sacrifice was too great to make for England's safety and England's honour. Class distinctions vanished; men at one extremity of the social scale uncomplainingly served as privates, shoulder to shoulder with men at the other extremity. Mothers, wives,

sisters, lovers, sent their dearest to peril and to death. The national sentiment was: My country first. And the same spirit is animating the nation now.

The glorious deeds of heroism in the field, in which you citizen soldiers vied with the Regulars, filled England with admiration, and convinced us that we still possess the finest soldiers in the world; whilst the fortitude and unselfishness of the wounded raised the national standard of pluck and endurance, and proved to us that the profession of arms is no hindrance to the formation of the noblest traits of Christian character. Moreover, under the strain that then came upon England, the Empire realized itself. That which in the year of the Diamond Jubilee was sentimentally ideal, became historically real; and though Imperialism may be ridiculed by the irresponsible frivolity of the "Little Englander," let it be recognised the Empire spells Peace, in a sense undreamt of by Napoleon the Third who invented the phrase, and now to be learnt by the modern Napoleon who has plunged Europe into war.

The Spirit of Imperialism is now so realized by the millions who speak the English tongue, that the remotest Colony is prepared to reach forth an armed hand to the little island whence it sprang, with the declaration "Whoso toucheth you, toucheth the apple of my eye."

It is therefore with a new sense of appreciation that we civilians welcome here to-day this

fine Regiment of the Territorial Army, about to fight for English hearths and homes, and your recognized value as our guarantee of national impregnability, until England boldly adopts the one only national safeguard of universal compulsory military service for home defence, accentuates your responsibility and the importance of the four apostolic words of command which I have quoted.

And, first, "HONOUR ALL MEN." Recognize the dignity of humanity. Despise no man, whether he be friend or enemy. Man in his inmost, deepest being is the highest self-utterance of God. Man, in the truest sense, is the Eternal Thought of God embodied. There is a spirit in man, and this Spirit is a ray of the Creator's Life uttered into flesh. The divine image may be marred, the divine likeness lost, it is part of the predestined purpose that we should be "made subject to vanity, not willingly," but the relationship remains; elementally and eternally, God and man are inseverable. I press this word of command, because it is the basis for unfaltering assurance amidst the struggles, failures, disappointments of this passing perishing existence. Because the non-realization of it retards the purpose of God. Because the worst evils which degrade humanity would pass away before its recognition. Because the inexhaustible and ultimately effectual remedy for human depravity is the realization of the central indwelling

immortal divine sonship in man. Obviously, when this high and true conception of the dignity of man is realized, it will ultimately obliterate war, and, in the meanwhile, every recognition of it softens international irritations, rebukes unreasonable jealousies, extinguishes vindictive passions, and mitigates the horrors inseparable even from the most righteous war. There is such a thing as a righteous war. If ever there was a righteous war, it is our present conflict with Germany. We are forced to fight, as the Prime Minister said, "to fulfil a solemn international obligation and to vindicate the principle that small nationalities are not to be crushed." The war to which you are called is a direct co-operation with the spirit of evolution which advances and educates humanity. And the heroes who will lay down their lives, in simple obedience to the call of duty, are, in the inwardness of things, carrying out, as instruments, like Joshua's army of old, the purpose of the Ruler of the universe. It may sound like a contradiction in terms, but in such a struggle as that before us now you are positively obeying God by killing men.

"Honour all men," though, in the process of race development, some of them are, and must be your deadly enemies. Leave the apparent contradiction, the puzzle, to its Infinite Author, whose inextinguishable purpose will be made clear when the fitful fever of this mortal life is over and the shadows flee away.

“**LOVE THE BROTHERHOOD.**” Accept my paraphrase though I acknowledge it is a limitation. Understand the words “Love the Brotherhood” as meaning in your case “Love your Regiment.” Let each man believe that he belongs to the best disciplined, most effective Corps of the Territorial Army in England. And let him strive to realize the ideal in himself.

“Love the Brotherhood,” in other words, swear by your Regiment. Keep its standard high, its fame unsullied, and its discipline unbroken. Let each man say “The Regiment, it is myself,” and you will be contributing your share, and that no small share, to the “safety, honour, and welfare of our Sovereign and his dominions.” And, in this context, I reverse the order of the two last words of command and say here “**HONOUR THE KING.**” To emphasize this word of command to you is wholly unnecessary. Happy is the free, democratic nation that is able unreservedly, with its entire heart and understanding, to obey this command. To honour the King is a spontaneous and irresistible impulse to an Englishman. And to those who wear his uniform, the name, “The King,” represents the high-water mark of loyalty, for the King is the epitome of the Empire, the embodiment of all that is included in the word Patriotism.

Finally, “**FEAR GOD.**” It is a brief word of command, very easy to utter, but it includes the whole mystery of your being. Fear God! The

religious history of the world has been little else than one long wrestle with this word of command, "Fear God." The brief injunction is suggestive of much mental conflict, of the travail of human souls intensely sensitive to the fact of their existence, but utterly baffled in their search for a solution of the mystery of being. There are, and there have been, thousands of such souls. In their passionate denial of the miserable and imperfect conceptions of the responsible Father of humanity forced upon them by rudimentary religionists, they have been driven into hostility, and execrated as unbelievers, when it was not God, but man's false view of God, they were rejecting, and when there has been more essential reverence in their denial than in the so-called "believing" of the orthodox who condemned them.

"Fear God!" Is the moral nature of man capable of this supreme act? If not, the history of man is a mockery, his creation a wrong. God, as Infinite Universally diffused Individuality, may be beyond full mental conception; and yet real earnest thinking will always find Him. Reason explains, infers, combines, argues from what is to what must be, and finds God. First, by inference, as Leverrier found the planet Neptune. "The consciousness of an inscrutable power manifested through all phenomena," said Mr Herbert Spencer, "has been growing clearer, and must eventually be freed from all imperfections; the certainty that such a power exists is the conclu-

sion to which science inevitably arrives." And when the inward vision, the instinctive affirmation of God which is part of the original outfit, so to speak, of every man, the faculty of God-consciousness which is involved in every soul born into the world, takes up, and carries on this inference that Mr Spencer calls "the conclusion to which science inevitably arrives," a man knows that there is an unoriginated, invisible, universal Parent-Spirit who is round him, in him, loving him, and ever "closer than breathing, nearer than hands and feet."

So the Apostle's most cogent word of command is "Fear God," not with timidity, but with loving filial reverence. Read Lawrence's epitaph: "he feared man so little because he feared God so much." Fear God, and the secret of the universe is yours. Know that you are always in a Presence of Divine Love and you will be filled with a sense of rest and security. You know, that, in the midst of all perplexities, one law is ruling, one love is pulsing, one purpose is fulfilling, and "all things are working together for ultimate universal good."

Let this be my farewell message to this fine corps on its way to its duty. Fear God, for your own sakes, and as a contribution to the stability of the commonwealth. There is no more splendid specimen of the human race than the truly God-fearing man wearing the King's uniform. So thought the Duke of Wellington when he issued his celebrated General Order,

of July 19, 1848, in which he said “the stronger the sense of religion the British soldier possesses, the better soldier he is.” So thought the gallant Lord Airlie, who was shot at the head of the 12th Lancers, saving the guns at Diamond Hill. Know God ; not only as the Author of the order of the universe, not only as the sovereign disposer of the destinies of humanity, but as the indwelling life and inspiration of the immortal being of man, as the unwearied, compassionate friend of every human being, as the Universal Parent-spirit Who has been specialized, Incarnated, in the Lord Jesus, that we may realize Him, trust Him, and give Him love for love.

And then, death (what we call death, for there is no death), whether it meets you on the battle-field or elsewhere, is but an incident in an endless human career, for, as Whittier says :—

Beneath the shadow of the Great Protection
 The soul sits hushed and calm.
 Bathed in the peace of that Divine affection
 No fever-heats of life, or dull dejection
 Can work the spirit harm.

.
 Not any power the Universe can know,
 Can touch the spirit hid with Christ in God.
 For nought that He has made, below, above,
 Can part us from His love.

Every heart in the Abbey echoes the prayer—

God bless the Queen's Westminsters, collectively
 and individually, may they be calm in danger,
 merciful in victory, glorious in achievement,
 And faithful to God.

APPENDIX IV

Beati misericordes, quoniam ipsi misericordiam consequuntur.

I BRING this book to a close with the narration of an incident for which I could find no proper place in the preceding chapters. It vividly illustrates both the tenderness towards misery, and the practical helpfulness, which distinguished Basil Wilberforce and his wife in their ministrations of mercy.

In the year 1899 a wretched girl was found guilty of poisoning her sister, and was condemned to death. Her father, imagining that Wilberforce must, in virtue of his position at the House of Commons, have special access to the Home Secretary, implored him to use his influence with a view to obtaining a commutation of the sentence. This he did, but the application was refused. On the day fixed for the execution, Wilberforce and his wife went early in the morning to the house in north London where the girl's parents lived. When the fatal hour approached, Wilberforce, kneeling in the midst of the weeping family, conducted a service of intercession for the departing spirit.

When the clock told the mourners that all was over, he urged them to seek balm for their wounded hearts where he himself, in moments of sorrow, had so often found it—amid the sights and sounds of nature. He sent them, from the noisy and unsympathetic surroundings of a squalid home, to spend the day in Epping Forest. He made it pecuniarily possible for them all to forgo the day's work; and Mrs Wilberforce had brought with her a hamper of food, so that they might be able to spend the sad hours in undisturbed retirement.

This incident, perhaps small in itself, is worthy of record, because it exemplifies, better than any elaborate panegyric, the character and life of those who figure in it. "The growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts."¹

G. W. E. R.

¹ George Eliot.

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